NOVEMBER 1963

Commentary

VOLUME THIRTY-SIX, NUMBER FIVE

RUSSIA: KHRUSHCHEV AND AFTER

Oscar Gass

AN INTERVIEW: Isaac Bashevis Singer

THE MODERN HIGH SCHOOL: Edgar Z. Friedenberg

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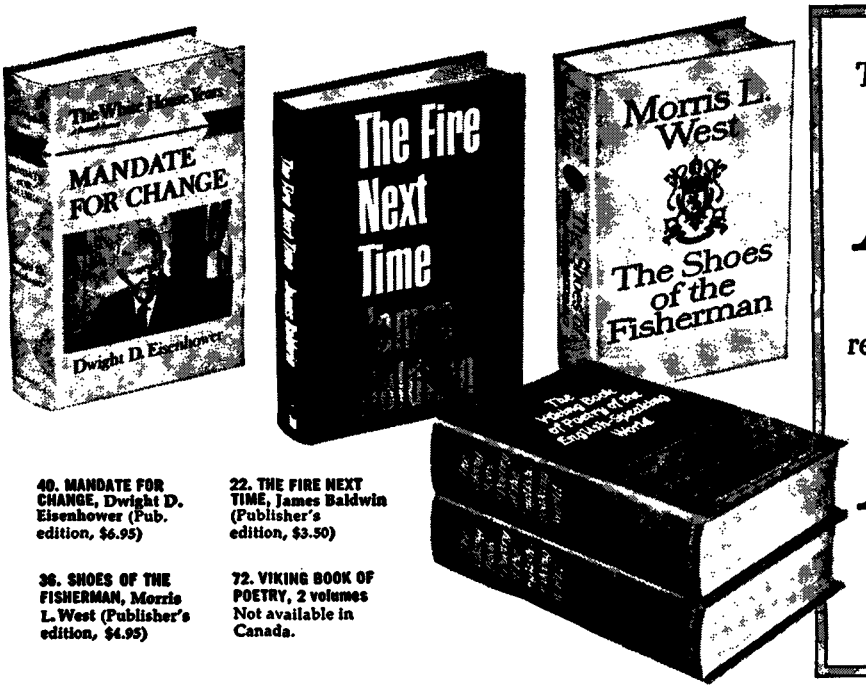

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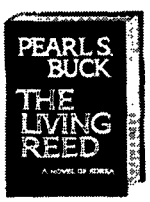

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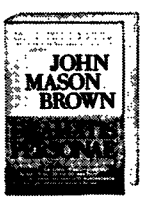

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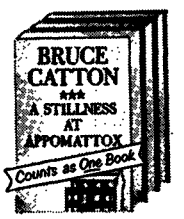

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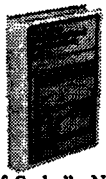

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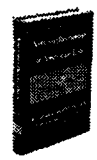

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Reapportionment

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Too much space is given in Alexander M. Bickel's article ["Reapportionment & Liberal Myths," June] to elaboration of the theory of judicial logic. The controlling issue in reapportionment is not logic but equality. The matter is further confused with considerations of the senatorial "one state—two votes" idea, one also largely irrelevant to reapportionment. Mr. Bickel makes some points, but in the end profoundly obscures the question of the courts vs. gerrymandering.

Mr. Bickel's position is that since the courts lack the competence, political efforts are the right ones to use. But how are unapportioned disfranchised voters to invoke a political instrument? "Let a major political effort, led by majoritarian executives [governors], be tried in that direction," cries the author; but the state political machines, perpetuated by their own gerrymandering, choose the candidates from whom governors and senators are elected. . . .

The article presents a particular point of view. . . . Unwary readers might think it is an evaluation of the role of the courts in reapportionment, but it is a piece of special pleading for a position which may be untenable, and is rather obscurely explained.

Herbert Harvey
Spring Valley, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Bickel offers the premise that ". . . if the representative institutions are seen as properly exercising a relatively independent, deliberate decision-making function, elections and the vote become matters of a different order of importance. . . ." [But] in recent years the legislative bodies of this country (both federal and state) could be better described as the antithesis of decision-making bodies. To deny that they deliberate would be absurd, but to say that they decide in any positive manner would be equally foolish. They obstruct rather than advance, and have in the past three years prevented any fundamental debate on the major issues which President Kennedy has earmarked as being of vital importance. . . . We have not, in fact, moved out of the late 40's in our conception and implementation of both foreign and domestic problems and policies. . . .

We can no longer sit back . . . confident that our present political institutions are the best ones; that any necessary minor alterations can be handled by the powers that be. No state or federal representative is going to legislate himself out of a job. Reform is so long overdue that the changes which are needed necessitate major surgery, and this can come only from outside the system.

Mr. Bickel writes: ". . . our imperfect representative institutions are better fitted than the courts to tinker with the system." . . . Many people would agree with this concept of American politics, including the Supreme Court. Thus, it would seem that the Court's decision involved not dictating what reforms are necessary, but rather pointing out the fact that something has to be done. The nature and shape of these reforms, "within reason," should be constructed and carried out by the politicians themselves . . . but if they are too much stuck in the rut of obstruction and postponement, the Supreme Court has given notice that it can and will act to guarantee that some form of equality be established.

Mr. Bickel's basic assumption . . . is that democracy comes from access and participation rather than the vote. . . . His view of politics—the Burkean model of virtual representation, what we call the republican form of government—assumes that only the best types will be selected to govern. In practice, of course, this has been honored more in the breach. Democracy is the rule of the people; if we cannot have the best men reflecting and deciding for us then we must try to do it ourselves. Our history, in fact, has been a process of giving the people more say in the government. This has been most evident in our voting reforms, i.e., the abolition of property qualifications, the direct election of Senators, and the virtual abandonment of the electoral college system. . . .

We must assume that the people, if given a chance, will decide what is right for themselves and for the country. They have not done so badly with the Presidents elected during the past few decades. It ought to be possible to devise a system through which the people who elect the President —the people of the cities—would have their proportionate say in electing a Congress. If America is really a democracy, let us not be afraid of establishing the institutions of one.

William M. Vogel
Abeokuta Grammar School
Abeokuta, Nigeria

To the Editor of Commentary:

Alexander M. Bickel wonders whether there are "enough Silk Stockings in New York, for example, to elect a Congressman from an equal, compact, contiguous Silk Stocking district." As Republicans go, Mr. Lindsay is exceptionally enlightened, which, apparently, is Mr. Bickel's point. But, alas, the same Silk Stockings who cherish Mr. Lindsay, returned to Congress for years almost without number his predecessor, the impeccably reactionary Frederic W. Coudert. For that matter, the non-Silk Stockings of Manhattan's West Side have elected and re-elected the still more enlightened William F. Ryan. Equal apportionment may not be a good idea, but Mr. Bickel's illustration fails to support his case.

Robert Lekachman
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Mr. Bickel is entitled to apply law-school definitions to the abstract constitutional questions which seem to bother him. It is when he steps into the realities of apportionment and the practical problems of two-party government that, to those of us in what he calls "the messy political arena," his observations and conclusions become ludicrous. And it is precisely here in this sweating, contending, political atmosphere, that the Court must first come to determine what "equal protection of the laws" really means—just as it needed the testimony of school psychologists to pierce the "separate but equal" theory in the segregation cases.

I am a Democratic member of the New York State Legislature—which the Democratic party has won in only one year out of the last fifty and in which the Republican party has won fifty-three of the last fifty-six Assembly elections and thirty of the last

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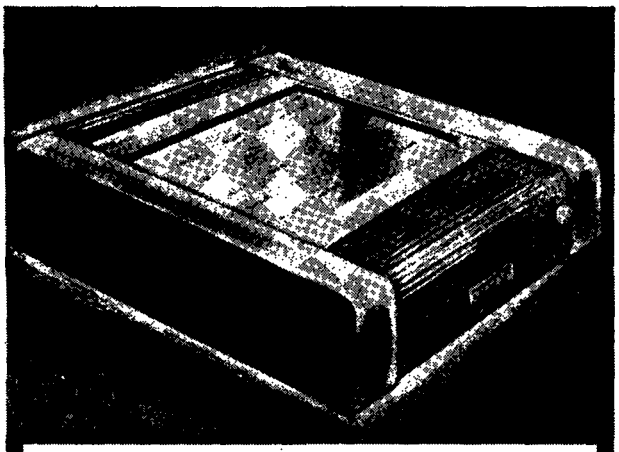

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thirty-four Senate elections since the 1894 Constitution established the current formula. This has occurred despite the fact that a Democratic governor has served in twenty-seven out of the last fifty and that Democratic legislative candidates have polled a higher aggregate vote than their Republican opponents in each house in the last three legislative elections.

Mr. Bickel assumes that the election of a governor on a one-person-one-vote basis in some way balances the immense and exclusive power of the legislature to propose and enact legislation. He then suggests that the governor—who can only act negatively by veto and affirmatively by press release—might lead the fight to correct the "institutional habits" by which state legislatures husband their power. No participant in the legislative process could make this error—it is not so and it is simply not possible.

It is possible, Professor Bickel continues, that the real fault of state legislatures lies not in malapportionment and self-perpetuation, but in their antiquated procedures and seniority systems. What he overlooks—and what is clear to any observer in the arena—is that these procedures are the weeds which flourish in and help to obscure the neglected garden of malapportioned one-party state legislatures.

The strongest, least realistic statement of all is that "State governments subsist in large measure on federal handouts," and this may be the real cause of "urban rot and the obsolescence of federalism." What nonsense! —federal programs have developed largely because lop-sided state legislatures have been unable or unwilling to undertake urban social programs without such aid. But Mr. Bickel apparently suggests that cutting down federal aid might be a good way to rehabilitate state legislatures and their procedures!

Mr. Bickel suggests a mass assault by the "under-represented" on the political arena, "exerting every ounce of power and influence we can command." . . . [But] apportionment laws are administered by those whose stake is power, while his stake is righteous indignation. I have seen too many ounces of "power and influence" diffused in that kind of fight to place much reliance upon the sophisticated help which Professor Bickel offers.

"Careful gerrymandering" might accomplish the same discrimination as malapportionment, says the professor, and therefore, I take him to conclude, judicial intervention would serve no purpose. This does not stand up to classroom analysis, whether as a practical argument or a principle of constitutional law. Gerrymandering is the handmaiden of malapportionment—a part of the politics of self-perpetuation. A truer two-party system—each party taking the risk of the vote rather than the assurance of an apportionment formula—could lead, through a balance of risks, to the non-partisan method of redistricting we all desire.

Finally, Professor Bickel doubts the "equal-vote premise," i.e., that it is essential to a representative system that each person have one vote fairly counted. But it is simple fairness (the ultimate foundation of democracy) that we try as best we can to have each legislator represent an equal number of people in at least one house of the legislature. And we have come to the point in our political life at which the Supreme Court is the last hope of re-establishing simple fairness to urban voters in legislative choice.

At every turn in our rich constitutional history, legal academicians can be found carefully explaining why the turn should not be made. It is the genius of an organic Constitution that the Supreme Court has had the capacity to look at the facts of life as well as the abstract law.

JACK E. BRONSTON
5th District
The Senate
Albany, New York

MR. BICKEL *writes:*

I may say to Mr. Harvey that I regret any obscurities I may have perpetrated. And I agree with him that my position *may* be untenable. But I have been unable to persuade myself that it is. I suppose I ought to assure Mr. Harvey that I have no vested interest in malapportionment, and no cause to plead. Mr. Lekachman mistakes my point. It isn't that I think it worthwhile to keep John Lindsay in Congress (though on other grounds I do think so), but that I believe the Silk Stockings should be represented by a man specially responsive and congenial to them, whoever he may be, even a Coudert. I think the same of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, farmers, and other distinguishable groups of reasonable size. Mr. Vogel and I seem to be at one on a number of points. But I firmly disclaim the Burkean view of representation, and don't see why Mr. Vogel expects that reapportionment will "get the country moving again."

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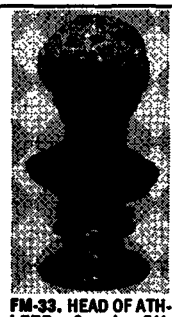

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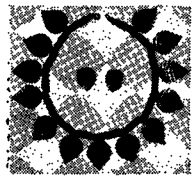

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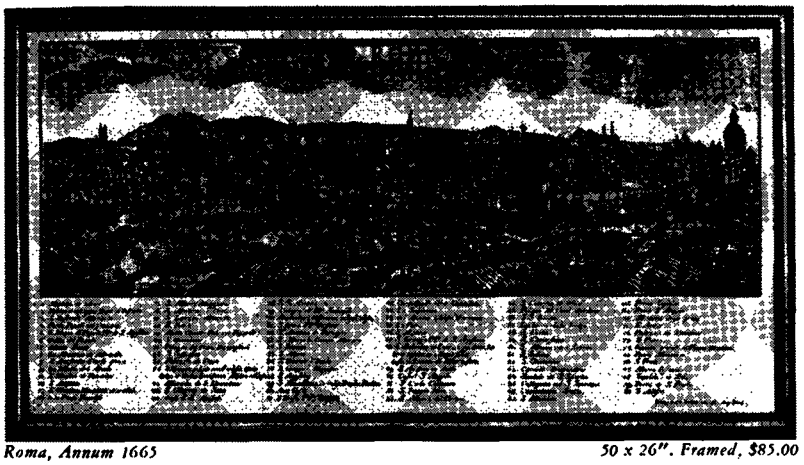

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Quite evidently, Senator Bronston and I adopt different premises, and also, I think, different manners of debate. The senator believes that the equal-vote principle embodies simple fairness. I have permitted myself to doubt that this is a meaningful statement, and have tried to explain why. Certain conclusions follow for Mr. Bronston. They don't for me. One thing I did not suggest was that federal grants-in-aid ought to be cut down, though there would be some point in administering them somewhat differently.

Hughes as Historian

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jason Epstein's review of Emmet Hughes's *The Ordeal of Power* [June] was astoundingly irresponsible. His preoccupation with what he terms Hughes's "inadequacies of heart and mind" caused him to assess the political career of Emmet Hughes rather than that of the Eisenhower administration, which is, after all, what the book is about. Regardless of what one thinks of Hughes's forays in the political arena, one is duty-bound to review the book on the basis of what it tells the reader about the Eisenhower years.

Mr. Epstein's assertion that the book "is of no interest for what it says about Eisenhower and his administration or for what it adds to the common knowledge of recent American politics" causes this reader to suspect that Mr. Epstein and the many distinguished, informed political commentators who reviewed the book elsewhere were not reading the same volume. *The Ordeal of Power* contains many fascinating insights and perceptive appraisals. That these are set in the framework of Mr. Hughes's contemporary attitude toward the Eisenhower administration . . . adds to the interest. . . . If Mr. Epstein failed to gain any deeper understanding of the past administration from this book, he is obviously wasting his time as a publisher, since he apparently knows more about politics than anyone now writing in the field.

THOMAS GUINSBURG
New York City

MR. EPSTEIN *writes:*

I don't know what the distinguished commentators read, but I'm certain that the book I read was *The Ordeal of Power*, a book which has as little to say about "the Eisenhower years" as *Hamlet* has to say about the history of Denmark. The main character in Hughes's book is

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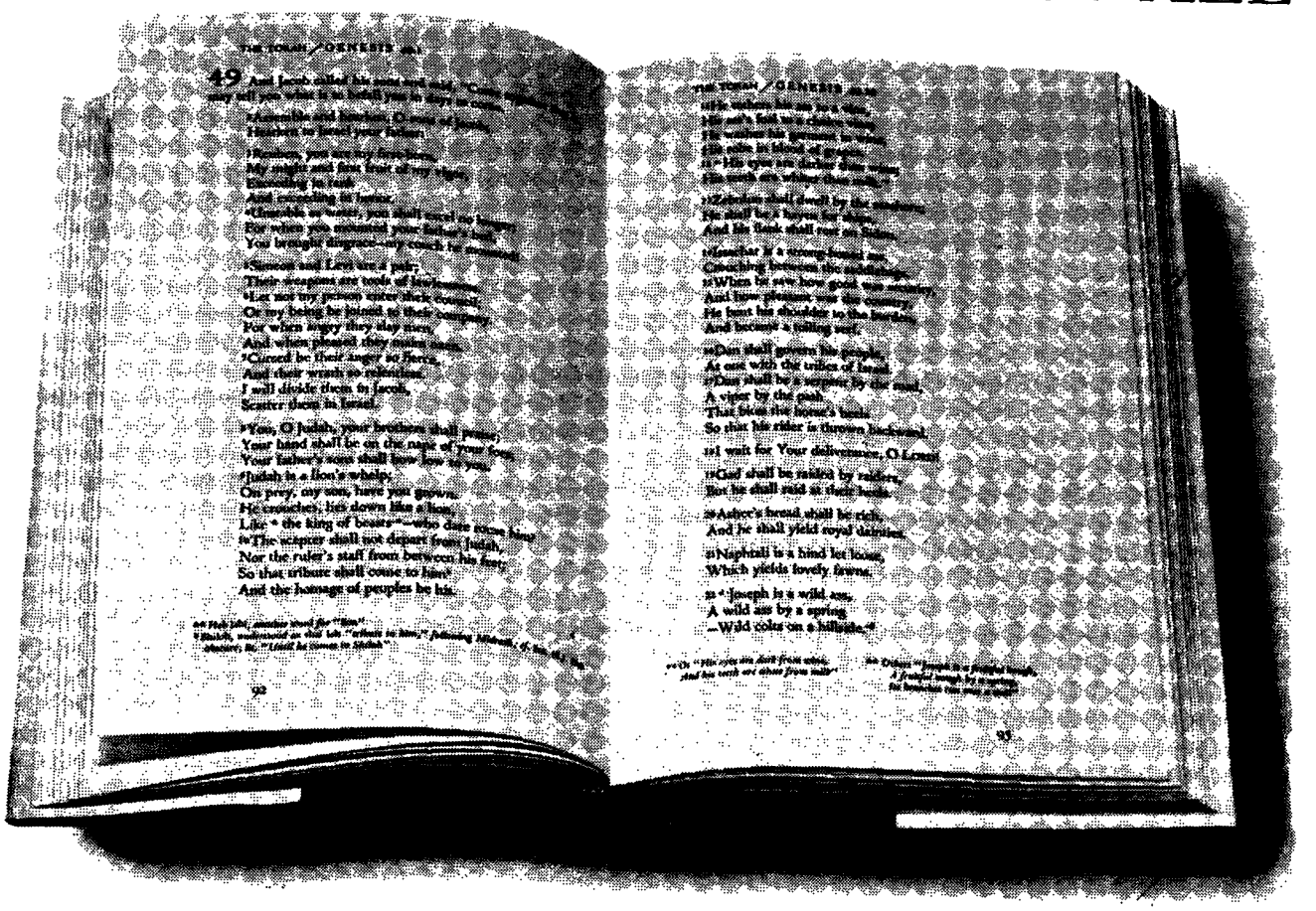

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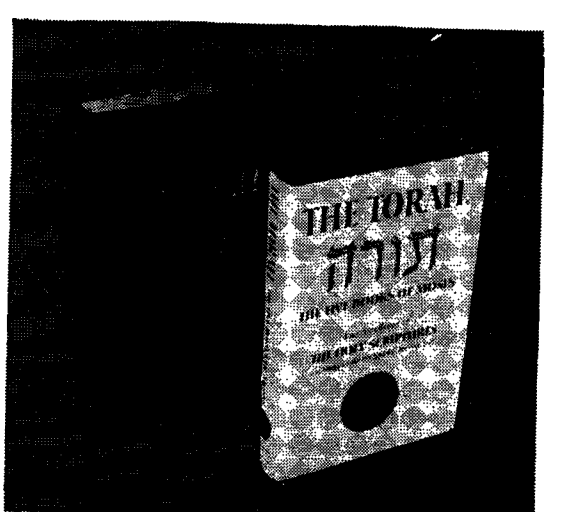

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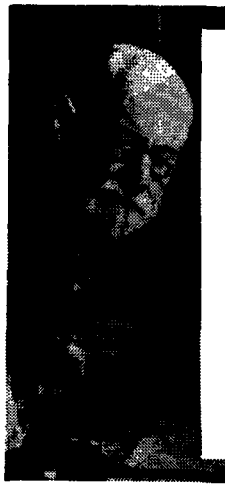

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Hughes himself. Old President Polonius is wheeled in and out only to keep the plot going. I'm flattered that Mr. Guinsburg should find I know more about politics than the experts do, and after reading the other reviews of Hughes's book, I suspect he's right. Nevertheless, I think I'll stay with publishing which is, after all, the more noble calling, as those who have followed Harold Macmillan's career will agree.

TV's Professionals

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Harris Dienstfrey's comments ["Doctors, Lawyers, and Other TV Heroes," June] suggest that our TV professionals, white Protestants though they be, represent our desire for a "good" community . . . in which work has meaning for the total well-being of the society. . . . This seems a rather superficial observation. What is obvious about the "professional" shows is that the focus has shifted from work to the social situation surrounding it. To observe the trend toward "social adjustment," we have only to contrast the original *Medic* show with *Ben Casey*. Whereas the primary concern on *Medic* was the saving of human life and the healing of the sick, on *Ben Casey* it no longer matters if a patient lives or dies. What is essential . . . is the moral righteousness of the patient as he dies. . . .

In light of the "patriotic" jargon of contemporary politics, TV's "professional" message is a dangerous one. . . . "Heroic death" is no longer a possibility in the atomic age—one must not die heroically, but live meaningfully.

EVAN STARK
Bronxville, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Harris Dienstfrey's lucid analysis of the professional man as the new hero of television drama is so persuasive that it invites elaboration of the theme.

The television plays Mr. Dienstfrey discussed accept the professional in terms of the ideal public posture he adopts in real life. While this is true of all the new heroes, it is most easily demonstrated in the case of doctors. . . .

The Hippocratic Oath, which still haloes medical schools, academies, and associations, could almost serve as a character sketch for the protagonists of the first *Dr. Kildare* or *Ben Casey*. It contains the professed aim of helping fellow men, the absence of motives of personal gain, moral

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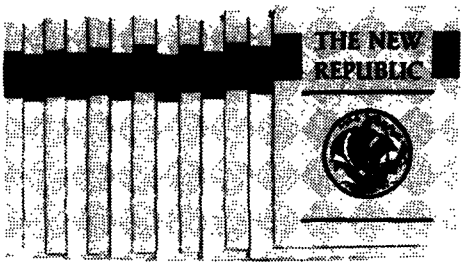

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rectitude, and public devotion, the strong teacher-disciple relationship, and perhaps one or two others. Caduceus in one hand, stethoscope in the other, the doctor poses for the official portrait, which is transferred directly to the television screen.

When we flip the dial from television drama to the programs that claim to deal with reality—the special reports and analyses, the forums and panel discussions—we find that, in most of these, the professional also emerges as an ideal personification. I remember a program involving two doctor-representatives of the American Medical Association and two doctors who favored the proposed Medicare legislation for the aged. The arguments pro and con were based purely on the welfare of patients, with no hint that doctors or their societies (particularly the AMA!) might have less noble motives.

In television dramas, there are seldom, if ever, evil people. The evil usually arises out of the actions of sick, compulsive, uninformed, or misguided individuals who may even be good at heart. In "serious" television reports and discussions, social evils (apart from those originating in the Communist world) are not attributed to the acts of individuals and groups, but arise out of the complex, impersonal forces of society. No one "really" wants corruption, slums, segregation. Hence there is no conflict, but only a difference of opinion, and evil will eventually be eradicated by enlightened men of good will, which includes everyone, since no one is excluded. . . .

JOSEPH MINDEL
Waban, Massachusetts

MR. DIENSTFREY *writes:*

Mr. Stark's description of the professional dramas on television does not differ from mine. Where we differ is in our estimate. Mr. Stark, whose dim view implies he does not think highly of the audience, seems to believe the concern of the dramas with "social adjustment" is morally meretricious and even a form of political manipulation. I maintained to the contrary that although this concern usually manifests itself in depressingly authoritarian situations, it just the same reflects an anxiety on the part of the audience about the way they, and we, live now.

Mr. Mindel's point about the core of fiction in the "reality" of many of TV's public-service programs strikes me as being exactly right. Has he ever noticed, though, the reality in the "fiction"—the tendency of the professional dramas to handle topics (such as abortion) which the public-service programs almost never touch?

Czech-Jewish Writing

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I enjoyed reading Edouard Roditi's "The 'Return' of Europe's Jews" [July] but wish he would have included some mention of Czech literature as well, where Jewish writers and topics have also recently regained a prominent place. Most noteworthy is the writer, Arnost Lustig, whose stories about the ghetto of Theresienstadt have won wide acclaim both in and outside his country and have been translated into several languages, including English (under the title *Night and Hope*). Lustig treats the moral and emotional predicament of the Jew under the Nazis, and the behavior of the Nazi toward him in its universal human aspects, in terms of what, mainly since the French existentialist writers, we have learned to call human isolation and alienation.

ABRAHAM AVNI
Madison, Wisconsin

Seymour: A Postscript

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What J. D. Salinger has done to merit the sustained abuse of literary critics is beyond me. . . . The constant lament seems to be: Oh, J. D., your raised our hopes so high, only to let us down!

Yet none of the critics (to my knowledge) has been bold enough to let us know *what he expected.* We only get hints here and there that betray the vexing turmoil into which Salinger has thrown the liberal ideologues. He has . . . upset all their grand plans, and now they take their revenge by declaring, like Alfred Chester ["Salinger: How to Love without Love," June] that Salinger is really a dead end ("All roads lead back to Seymour, or silence, or both").

Catcher in the Rye was pleasing to the liberal psyche because it attacked the pseudo-sophisticated American middle classes, that unruly, status-conscious group which sustained the New Deal and then turned around to smite the old leaders by an abrupt turn to radical conservatism. . . .

But just when the liberal critics thought they had a new spokesman, old J. D. shifted gears. Lo and behold, the middle-class suburbanites were not the only phonies: they were in the universities and colleges too, swarming over the campus in the form of teaching assistants, undergraduates, graduate students, and even, heaven forbid, professors of English. . . .

Salinger was great while he stuck to surface gestures which showed the grotesquesness of the middle class, Chester implies, but once he strayed onto the campus and started probing the libido of the intellectuals it hurt like mad. But the liberals have amazing recuperative powers, especially when they dominate the intelligent journals of opinion. . . . Salinger . . . can only be dismissed by means of the liberal critics' repeated claims that he is meaningless.

MICHAEL E. PARRISH
Pasadena, California

Field Work in Boston

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was flattered by Michael Parenti's review of my book, *The Urban Villagers,* [June] and his comparison of it with William F. Whyte's *Street Corner Society,* but I would like to correct two inaccurate comments he made about the latter. Whyte was not "content with merely describing what he saw and heard"; his book was—and still is—a major theoretical contribution to our understanding of group structure and its impact on individual behavior, as well as of the relationship between a low-income population, the urban political machine, and the underworld. Also, Whyte spent a much longer time on his field work than I; he lived in the North End for three and a half years while I was in the West End for less than a year. Whyte's study was published twenty years ago, and I can only hope that my book will stand the test of time half as well as his.

HERBERT J. GANS
New York City

Praise

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I very much enjoyed reading Nathan Glazer's article, "The Puerto Ricans" [July] and feel that the author is to be complimented on his observations.

A. FERNÓS ISERN
Resident Commissioner
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

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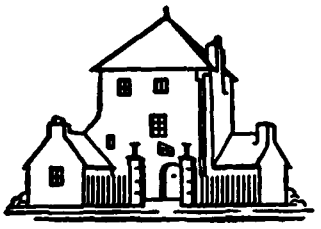

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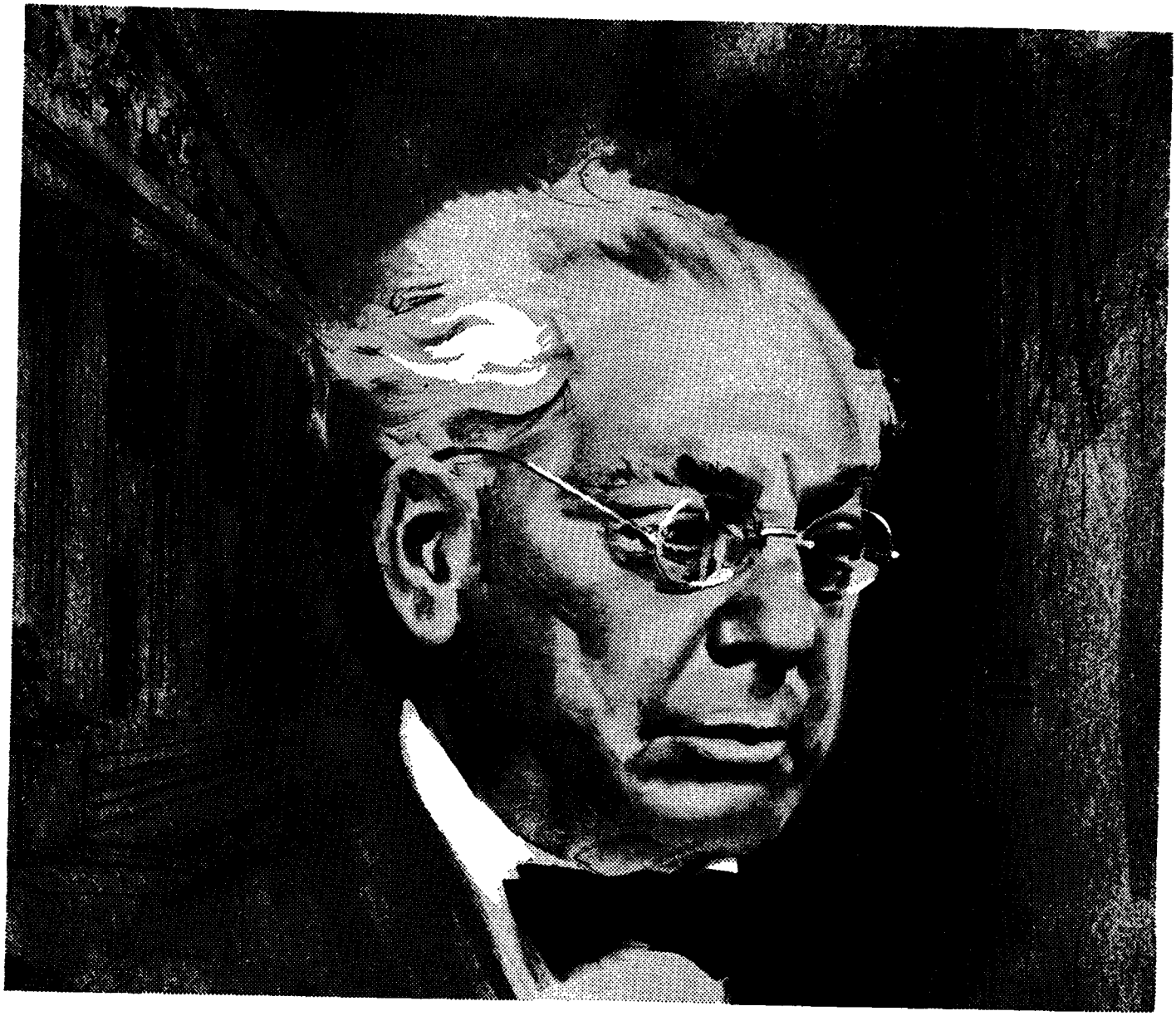

Champion Of Civil Rights

In the controversy that surrounds the civil rights movement today, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that civil rights had many great champions in American history. Such a champion was Louis Marshall.

Born in 1856, in Syracuse, New York, Marshall made his mark as a constitutional lawyer early in life. Among the cases he argued before the highest Federal and State courts were those concerned with workmen's compensation, segregation of Negroes, alien immigration, and the abolition of private and parochial schools. In fact, one of his notable legal triumphs in the United States Supreme Court was a decision which held invalid an Oregon law that denied Catholics the right to send their children to parochial schools. A conservative Republican, Marshall nevertheless was always on the side of minority groups. He was a champion of the underdog in American life.

Typical of Marshall's lifelong interest in American Jewry was his successful fight to persuade Congress to annul the Treaty of 1832 between Russia and the United States. American Jews carrying American passports were not treated the same as any other American citizen by the Russians. Marshall was principally responsible for having the treaty abrogated.

In addition, Marshall was the leading spokesman of the Committee of Jewish Delegations at the post-World War I Peace Conference. It was there that he secured certain "minority rights" for the helpless, harried Jews of Europe.

Founder and president of both the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Relief Committee, Louis Marshall was also the chairman of The Jewish Theological Seminary and of Dropsie College. Probably, however, he would have enjoyed this epigrammatical tribute to his eminence: American Jewry "was ruled by Marshall law."

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RUSSIA: KHRUSHCHEV & AFTER

OSCAR GASS

The test-ban treaty and the Sino-Soviet rift have given rise to much speculation on the degree to which the Soviet Union has actually changed under the rule of Nikita Khrushchev and on the further transformations which may reasonably be anticipated in the next years. It is to these questions that Oscar Gass *addresses himself in the series that begins with the present article, and that will continue in future issues with his analyses of the Soviet economy and of Russian foreign policy. Mr. Gass is a consulting economist in private practice in Washington, D.C. and a frequent contributor both to* Commentary *and to the* New Republic. *His essay, "China and the United States" in our November 1962 issue, was widely discussed.*

Of the play of political forces and the contest of personalities which culminated in the ascendancy of Khrushchev, we know little. Before we reach the events which are decisive, our information ceases. We have but victors' accounts, the silence of the dead, and cringing apologies from a few of the defeated.

Mr. Robert Conquest*—here perhaps our best guide, though we all stumble in darkness—sees the first post-Stalin settlement, in the early days of March 1953, as primarily a deal between Beria and Malenkov. All other persons are pushed into lesser roles, if they do not, like Poskrebyshev (presumably Beria's bitterest rival), entirely disappear. Yet Beria was out of the government administration when Stalin died. He headed neither of the two security ministries. It is possible that, in Stalin's direct administration of the security services, Poskrebyshev occupied the inner line. But, in the crucial first week of March, Stalin lay dead or dying. In those days, the successors met in the Kremlin, issued warnings to the public against "disarray and panic," and then took in hand the decisive task of chopping down Stalin's amorphous twenty-five-man Presidium to what emerged as their own ten-man Presidial ruling group. At that time, the streets of Moscow became solidly occupied by M.V.D. troops *who took Beria's orders.* Mr. Conquest particularizes: ". . . Beria had thus obtained control of the machine which could give him at least Moscow and the persons of most of his opponents. . . ." The new government formalized Beria's position, in a decree announced March 7, by consolidating both security ministries under Comrade Lavrenty Pavlovich Beria as USSR Minister of Internal Affairs. Mr. Conquest concludes that Beria had already ". . . regained control of the Police Ministries by what amounted to a coup." By this coup, he became kingpin in the new government. How then did he accomplish such a coup? We do not know.

Even more frustratingly obscure, and greatly important, are the events four years later, in the second half of June 1957, when Khrushchev defeated "the Anti-Party Group" and so set himself (like Stalin three decades earlier) on the way to unchallenged eminence. It is now officially acknowledged that, of an eleven-man Presidium, only three (Mikoyan, Suslov, and Kirichenko) sided constantly with Khrushchev during this crisis. The seven on the other side, consistent or wavering (Malenkov, Molotov, Voroshilov, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Saburov, and Peruvkhin), included all the old hands except Mikoyan. How then did they fail to win? Why was not Khrushchev's small group defeated and itself stigmatized as the anti-Party fraction? Could not a case be made that the seven were the collective leaders while Khrushchev was seeking personal dictatorship? Were these seven the people to launch a drive for power which was utterly foredoomed to failure?

The Central Committee of the Party would

* See his admirably researched, handsomely written book, *Power and Policy in the U.S.S.R.: The Study of Soviet Dynastics,* 1961.

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surely have accepted a resolution submitted to it in the name of the Presidium. But no such resolution was presented. Mr. Conquest concludes that the anti-Khrushchev majority of the Presidium ". . . must therefore have been prevented, by force or threat of it, from making its recommendations public, as it had every right to do. The obvious wielders of the threat of force were Zhukov . . . and Serov," the Army and the Security police, both acting for Khrushchev. After careful examination of the available fragments of evidence, Mr. Conquest summarizes:

> The defeat of the Anti-Party Group is perhaps best regarded as a coup (or counter-coup) by the Party Apparatus, the Army and the Security Police against a majority in the Praesidium which might otherwise have obtained a majority—or unanimity!—in the Central Committee.

So the decisive factor becomes the last moment intervention of armed force, which must be presumed—but about which no particulars are known! We do indeed see through a glass darkly.

And knowledge is not advanced when, for such undocumented deductions as those cited above, there are substituted unsubstantiated sociologizing judgments such as the one that Khrushchev's rise to power reflects a victory by the Party. How is "the Party" presumed to have brought about this victory? When Stalin's senior henchmen sat in the Kremlin in March 1953, they knew the Party as an instrument of guardianship, for the populace, which Stalin had subdued to his will. They did not solicit the Party's judgment; they would, in time, utilize its energies. So also, according to Mr. Conquest, in June 1957. By the time the Central Committee of the Party was assembled, the business had been finished. (Mr. Conquest insists that, in June 1957, "The [Central] Committee was by no means a Khrushchev preserve. . . .") The former anti-Khrushchev majority of seven in the Presidium had crumbled—whether under threats, inducements, or arguments. There was no debate. *Not one person of 133 members of the Central Committee is recorded to have spoken in favor of those who had only a few days earlier held a majority in the Presidium.* The Committee was assembled to ratify decisions already taken elsewhere. Its role was to shout "Hurrah!" when given the signal, to denounce and vilify whoever was marked for such courtesies. Who then had decided and why? We do not know.

In the above, I have followed Mr. Conquest, though without his wealth of detail. But the student of our ignorance will not have begun to acquit his responsibilities until he compares this scheme of things with at least one sharply contrasting version of these critical events. I recommend that of Mr. Merle Fainsod.* Here with Mr. Conquest—at the determinative points—largely coercion (M.V.D., Zhukov, Serov), there with Mr. Fainsod all politics. Malenkov, who may be presumed to have known both Party and State (having been with Stalin in the central Party machine since 1925 and held the highest government offices since 1941), is charged by Mr. Fainsod with error in having yielded the senior Party role in 1953 to Khrushchev while retaining the position of Premier. The Central Committee of 1956–57 *is* represented, in contrast to Mr. Conquest's view, as packed in 1956 by Khrushchev. (The strength of Mr. Fainsod's argument, at this point, seems weakened by the fact that fully half of the 1956 Central Committee and candidates were *not* reelected in October 1961, when Khrushchev did unquestionably control everything.) Not Zhukov or Serov or any other occult force is decisive in June 1957, but the rank and file Central Committee members of the provinces! Where Mr. Conquest sees a previously decided matter—and adduces the evidence of a unanimity which could only have been coerced—Mr. Fainsod sees debate and discussion. He concludes: "The victory of Khrushchev symbolizes the ascendancy of the Party bureaucracy in its quintessential form."

I do not believe we know Mr. Conquest is right and Mr. Fainsod wrong. I believe we do not know.

Office, Party, and First Citizen

The role of the Party in bringing Khrushchev to power is an issue we must leave to later, better-documented historians. But Mr. Fainsod's assertion that the Khrushchev regime represents the quintessence of bureaucracy is a formulation that can be probed usefully now. Montesquieu, who valued the role of a very different bureaucracy as a resistant "intermediary power" in a nominally absolutist regime, would not have found the Khrushchev bureaucracy at all quintessential. With the vision of the 18th century, we may see clearer.

Is not the quintessential bureaucratic order one in which the bureaucrat reaches official position by accomplishments which are *his* doing or by inheritance or purchase whereby office becomes *his* property? (Surely he may demonstrate his claim to office as independently by schooling and competitive examination as in the inheritance or purchase of the *Ancien Régime*.) Is not the envied

* *How Russia is Ruled,* 1963 edition, pages 161–175.

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bureaucrat also one who enjoys great security of tenure, as well as eminence in government, and derives from *both* sources his high social consideration? The quintessential bureaucrat of Montesquieu is not the dependent of a fickle superior. The heaven of the bureaucrat is not the dominance of the office. Where the office is everything, the bureaucrat may be nothing. Francis Bacon has evoked for us, in golden English, the absolutist world where offices ("places") are dominant, not bureaucrats:

> The rising unto place is laborious, and by pains men come to greater pains; and it is sometimes base, and by indignities men come to dignities. The standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall, or at least an eclipse.

To be eclipsed from high place, in the mature Stalin system, meant to be shot. Khrushchev has substituted *rotation*. For high and low, rotation in office is the Khrushchev principle of government. Only one supreme guardian of guardians is immune from its sweep.

Six years after Stalin's death, Khrushchev had disposed of every one of his senior associates of Stalin's day except Mikoyan. (The completion of this phase may be dated December 1958, with the removal of Bulganin and Serov.) Khrushchev has been far quicker than Stalin to eject old associates. But he has, with few exceptions, not shot them. Of the ten men who formed the first post-Stalin Presidium, by the end of 1958 only two remained in high office—Khrushchev and Mikoyan. Beria had been shot; the other seven had been thrown out. Since March 1953, twenty-five persons have been named to the second USSR echelon of power, the "candidates" to the Presidium. Of these, one (Bagirov, associated with Beria) was shot; eight were promoted to the Presidium; six remain candidates; ten have been ejected into darkness—most of them far out where the sun does not reach. In the third echelon, the Central Committee, demotion has also been drastic; less than half of the Central Committee members elected at the Party Congress of February 1956 still held that office of high ceremonial dignity after the Party Congress of October 1961.

Rotation is king, in the present Khrushchev regime, also at every lower Party echelon. By now, it has become as self-conscious and deliberate a method of disciplining the Party guardians as the firing squad and (for lesser fry) the concentration camp in Stalin's time. Khrushchev may remove anybody. And he has now promised to remove nearly everybody—all but the very best! Since 1961, universal rotation has been set out in formal rules. These are to be waived only in cases of exceptional merit. At each election, the following will have to go: at least one-fourth of the membership of the Presidium and Central Committee of the Party; at least one-third of the members of other high ruling committees; at least half of the lowest echelon of Party bodies. Individual members also will be limited "as a rule" to a *maximum* of three successive terms in the higher bodies, two in the lowest. But there is always an escape clause for the best! At every level, exceptions may be made to preserve "continuity of leadership" by retaining in office persons outstanding ". . . by virtue of their recognized authority and high political, organizational, or other abilities. . . ." Party officer, keep on your toes! Be devoted and outstanding, and you may retain office! But let no one form "families" or cliques of officials with the idea of ". . . mutual concealment of shortcomings and mistakes in work." Such families or cliques—groupings nascently resistant to the omnipotence of the center—will be pulverized wherever detected.

In the lower echelons of the Party, the spontaneous individual voice is drowned by the authority of the hierarchy and the weight of herded numbers. In the most impressionable age group, children of ten to fifteen, almost everybody (18½ million in April 1962) is in the Pioneers. At the next level, young people up to age twenty-eight, perhaps two-fifths (19½ million in April 1962) are in the Komsomol.* The adult Party itself (9,716,000 members and candidates in 1961) is getting larger steadily; soon it may comprehend 10 per cent of the whole adult population. Above the mass of Party members, stand about 200,000 paid Party officials, the "secretaries" who make up the Party "apparatus." They are the paid guardians of guardians. But, for popular ideology, the millions are, of course, joined with the one. The massed herd of Party members, the hierarchy of the apparatus, the Presidium of leaders, and Comrade Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev—all one, the Party. The Party is the supreme vehicle of "consciousness."

In the Khrushchev regime, as in the mature phase of Stalin's rule, the Party is run from the top down. Comrade Khrushchev, the leader of the Party guardians, chooses his followers. He personally coopts his immediate associates. They to-

* It is perhaps more than usually piquant that two successor heads of the Komsomol, A. N. Shelepin and V. Ye. Semichastny, should each have left this leadership of youth to take charge of the political security police (KGB).

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gether recruit and indoctrinate and direct and promote and dismiss the lower echelons of their Party. The Party machine is everything; the individual Party member, apart from his office, is almost nothing. And, for office, the individual Party member must look upward to his superiors —not outward to the general public. Such is now again the practical outcome of the principle which, from Lenin's inheritance, is called "democratic centralism," officially defined as ". . . the absolutely binding character of the decisions of higher bodies upon lower bodies." Where authoritative instructions are given, no subordinate body dares fail to elect him whom the higher body has designated. Even hesitation in electing can end careers in disaster.

Criticism indeed abounds today in the Soviet Union, and there are evidences of human dignity and self-assertion even at humble levels. (In this respect, Russian character gives heartening testimony of human resilience under great stress. Would Americans come out better?) But tolerated criticism is of limited issues, or of self, or of persons marked suitable for criticism. When a victim is designated to be stamped down, criticism rains on him in an organized, rehearsed campaign. The two nominally top agencies of Party sovereignty—the Congress and the Central Committee —do not criticize persons or policies unless they have been directed by the Presidium to do so. Whatever may have been true between March 1953 and December 1958, the Central Committee of the Party (175 members and 155 candidates) now has no significance in decisions. At most, a Central Committee meeting is a private and formal proceeding, where important decisions are announced, but where nuances of difference may yet be permitted to suggest themselves, and of which an—edited?—record may, on a rare occasion, be published. A Congress of the Party is now, for the rank and file delegate, merely a huge picnic. In October 1961, the Congress assembled 4,394 voting delegates—all of whom found themselves unanimous in all things, and in all things of the same view as Comrade Khrushchev and his Presidium. A high Chinese visitor could indicate dissent in unmistakable terms. Russian literary figures could even exchange dubious compliments, in carefully chosen language. But the ordinary delegate had nothing to do but listen to his betters, shout "Hurrah!," and go home.

I have denied that the government of the USSR is the fulfillment of the bureaucrat's dream. Is it then, on the contrary, the quintessence of personalism in dictatorship? No. Russia does not supply the archetype of personalist dictatorship in our time. That comes from Germany. Hitler's power was personalist in a degree and flavor the Communist order does not permit. The Leninist tradition remains attached to a democracy of ends and manners. (Certainly in the case of Lenin, probably in the case of Khrushchev, this attachment is also in accord with personal tastes and convictions.) Moreover, in Communism allegiance is due originally to the Cause and the Party and only derivatively to the Leader. After the one purge of recalcitrants on June 30, 1934, no Nazi professed to set limits to the allegiance due Hitler. Neither Lenin nor Stalin nor Khrushchev would assert, with Hitler, that government authority flows from the person of the Leader down, and public responsibility goes from the mass of the people up. Communism does not reach to that; indeed it veils the personal authority of the chief in the fiction of collective leadership and sinks both in the symbol of the Party—not the Leader—as the chosen instrument of History.

Political thought in the modern world is confined by names and concepts borrowed from Graeco-Roman experience. Not the least stifling is the prison of Caesar the Dictator. We would have done far better, for Khrushchev's case, to borrow from that stealthy Octavianus who demanded of his subsidized poets, his Madison Avenue claque, that they fabricate for him the image of an Augustus.* Mussolini, though an ignorant man, chose appropriately with Duce (*dux*). He had his own designs. He needed at once the symbol of a military leader and a party chieftain (*dux partium*). But Octavianus, like Khrushchev, could not figure as a military dictator and did not wish to do so. Inflate Actium as he might, it was still piddling stuff—like a secondary role in the great battles between Kiev and Stalingrad. Like Khrushchev, he had taken weighty part in proscriptions but desired to give the reassurance now named "socialist legality." He would retain real power to commit to outer darkness even a colleague with whom he nominally shared an equal consulship. But he would derive formal position not from a brutal army or police torturers or a partisan *squadrismo* but from the unanimous gift of a grateful people and its Senate (Central Committee). Khrushchev, like Octavianus—and this time in the same words!—wishes to be honored for authority (*auctoritas*) not power. Each would

* See the magisterial analysis of Ronald Syme in *The Roman Revolution*, 1939, especially chapters XXI, XXII, and XXXIII.

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play his part as *princeps* not *dux,* first citizen not dictator—whose authority is factually quite without equal but remains formally only first among colleagues.

Terror and Personality Cults

Khrushchev's regime differs decisively from Stalin's in one great matter: the abatement of terror. But Khrushchev does not yet dare tell the peoples of the USSR precisely—in places and times and numbers—what was done by the terror apparatus of Stalin's government. Even in March 1963, Khrushchev was still warning Russian writers away from this subject: "I repeat once again that this is a very dangerous theme and difficult material." The terror was too intimately bound up with the establishment of Communism and the careers of Communists. Khrushchev himself was esteemed sufficiently imbued with "the Stalinist method of work," during the Great Purge, to be raised by Stalin from Party boss of Moscow province to the still more responsible post of boss of the Ukraine.* Such origins are best veiled.

Under Stalin, hundreds of thousands were shot, more done to death in deportations, millions worked to death in forced labor. No private person in the USSR could ask how many, or when, or where. The terror multiplied its impact by mystery and randomness. Nobody could assure himself of immunity—not even by joining the police terrorists. Stalin had indicated that lulls in the terror would be followed by new crescendos. The transition to Communism would bring heightened, though irregular, class struggle. More class struggle, more terror.

We know, from Soviet documents which came to hand by chance of war, that the NKVD held several million men at forced labor in 1941. A capable victim (Alex Weissberg) made a calculated guess that about seven million persons were detained on political charges during two years of the Great Purge. Conscientious students, resident outside the USSR (notably David Dallin and Boris Nicolaevsky), believe the number of forced laborers ranged between seven and twelve million during various periods of Stalin's rule. We cannot know accurately.

Nothing more certainly characterized Stalin's heirs, at the hour of his death, than their fear of the Russian people. The new Presidium, released from Stalin's terror, did not rush off to free his political prisoners! On the contrary, political prisoners were specifically excluded from the first amnesty. A later generation may learn the full story of the uprisings of desperate men that then broke out in 1953 and 1954 and 1955, in the far north, at Norilsk and Vorkuta and Kingir, and at other places of which we do not know even the names, and of the suppression of these uprisings with every brutality and great bloodshed. Only afterward were "politicals" increasingly released from the forced labor camps. And then they were commonly required to remain, for an initial period, deported in distant places and under police surveillance. The system of deportation to remote areas, under police supervision, continues alive in the USSR—though we have no idea how often it is used. Reportedly, the old forced labor camps have now been closed. But there are admittedly new "corrective labor colonies," reputedly far smaller, reputedly far more humane. No outsider really knows.

In time, Stalin's heirs reported themselves to have cleaned out the old professional wielders of the terror. At least five terror chiefs (Poskrebyshev, Beria, Ryumin, Abakumov, and Bagirov) and their associates were shot. The process took three years. If Poskrebyshev was dead when his master was buried, Bagirov was not executed until April 1956. And large political issues were involved. A later generation must hold its mind open for that historian, with documents, who may prove even that Beria was the most "liberal" of the post-Stalin Presidium—on some issues: private plots for peasants, consideration for minority nationalities, anti-Semitism, de-Stalinization in eastern Europe, and perhaps other things. We can only guess.

The political security police (KGB) remains active and important. Mr. Nikolai Galay, whose views always deserve consideration, estimates that in 1962 this police still numbered 350,000 to 400,000 men! But general terror is not exerted. Even the new 1961–62 decrees, fixing death sentences for a number of economic crimes, do not reflect a general change. These decrees are intended to strike fear selectively, and they have been used as an instrument of anti-Semitism. In this latter respect, Khrushchev is again Stalin's heir; the anti-Semitism of his regime is acknowledged by all forthright and informed East Europeans. But, while this is repression, it is still far from general terrorism. There has been change. In May 1957, the Deputy Procurator General of the USSR could still say: "If it becomes necessary we will

* The unrevealing little we know of Khrushchev in Stalin's day is gathered together in Lazar Pistrak, *The Grand Tactician,* 1961.

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restore the old methods. But I think it will not be necessary." Today he would not even mention the old method of general terror as a live option.

WHEN KHRUSHCHEV has had occasion to speak of the misdeeds of Stalin—notably in February 1956, in October 1961, and in March 1963—he has never found it appropriate to acknowledge any personal shortcoming in his previous service and adulation of such a master. The famous "secret" speech of February 1956, for all its richness in side glances, tells a simple story and a grotesquely naïve one. Leninism is the path of adequate consciousness—at once insightful science and popular communion, enriched by submergence ". . . in the fountain of the people's living creativeness." Until 1934, Stalin followed this true path, created collective farms, built heavy industry, repelled every wrecker, and rendered great service to humanity. After 1934, Stalin alone, out of willfulness and perversity, turned from the straight Leninist way, capriciously slaughtered myriads of "honest Communists," and became ever more brutal and despotic, monstrous and mad. Stalin's nominal colleagues (with the exception of a few of the worst—Yezhov, Beria) did not know that Stalin was killing quite innocent people, but these colleagues (and indeed the Party as a whole) did know, and do now know, the true Leninist path. These colleagues of Stalin, or the best of them, are now, as always, true guardians, and they ". . . will lead the Soviet people along the Leninist path to new successes, to new victories. Long live the victorious banner of our party—Leninism!"

Khrushchev's later statement on the Stalin terror and the Stalin cult, in October 1961, reflects one striking development beyond February 1956. This change consists in the newly discovered fact that most of Stalin's (and Khrushchev's) colleagues had not been true guardians at all! They had been guilty associates of the Great Oppressor! Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, and Voroshilov —all "the Anti-Party Group"—were now portrayed as only less guilty than Beria. The present First Citizen was, of course, not of their company. "Thousands of absolutely innocent people perished," and *they* were guilty with Stalin. They ". . . had been guilty of abuses of power and mass reprisals." They ". . . feared a further exposure of their unlawful actions in the period of the cult of the individual." They desired to conceal the past, and to re-enact it. "They wanted to revert to the times—hard for our Party and our country—when no one was guaranteed against arbitrary reprisals. Yes, Molotov and the others wanted just that." They, not he. Khrushchev's was such a speech as is made by a First Citizen who need not fear that any person will dare ask him, in public, "And what of you, in the day when the thousands you now call innocent met their death? Did you not rush to throw the first stone? And what is there in the structure of your government now that inhibits you from doing the same again?"

That such questions are, however, in fact posed persistently, in private, emerges clearly from Khrushchev's important address of March 8, 1963, which bears the following imposing title: "High Ideological Content and Artistic Mastery Constitute the Great Strength of Soviet Literature and Art." There, speaking to the writers and artists, he gave question and answer:

> It is asked whether the leading party cadres [i.e. Khrushchev and his colleagues] at that time knew, for instance, about the arrests of people at that time. Yes, they did. But did they know that completely innocent people were being arrested? No, they did not know that. They trusted Stalin and they did not even admit the thought that repressions could be applied to honest people devoted to our cause.

So the First Citizen responds, with verbal directness, to the unspoken challenge of the writers and artists. He tells them what views of the past may safely be held during his Principate. He answers them concretely—at the expense of insulting their intelligence.

Even in 1963, the First Citizen holds to a considerable esteem for Stalin. "When plots against the revolution were discovered, Stalin, as secretary of the Central Committee, carried out the struggle with regard to ridding the country of plotters . . . Stalin, during the first years after the death of V. I. Lenin, defended Leninist positions . . . Stalin was devoted to Communism. He was a Marxist." Khrushchev then devotes a long aside to correspondence of 1933, between Sholokhov and Stalin, in which Sholokhov describes the persecution of tens of thousands of peasants. Khrushchev credits Sholokhov with knowing such things already in 1933, while he, the boss of Moscow and the Ukraine, had to wait till Stalin's death, till 1953, to learn of these things—and then only from hitherto inaccessible records and interrogations! "We learned of Stalin's abuse of power and the instances of arbitrariness which he committed only after his death and the exposure of Beria, that rabid enemy of the Party and the people, spy and vile provocateur . . . agent of the imperialists." The insult to the intelligence of the audience ac-

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quires the character of the phantasmagorical art of Abram Tertz.

While Khrushchev was tearing down the cult of Stalin, he was surpassing Stalin in building up the worship of Lenin. Lenin, Leninist, Leninism—the words are repeated to the point of nausea. The Party program of 1961 begins with, "The brilliant genius of Lenin, the great teacher of the working people of the world, whose name will live forever . . .," and it employs the words Lenin, Leninist, and Leninism eighteen times in its first five pages. If a Russian wins a chess game, praise be to Lenin! If a dog is spun around the earth, glory to Lenin! A pious and sensitive Christian would feel it blasphemy to have the name of Christ so often on his lips. But so universally accepted is this Lenin worship, that even dissenters bow before it, appealing to the true Lenin against those who would disfigure him. So Professor Etiemble, in a brilliant paper on Russian painting,* first loads himself with cloying references to the all-wise Vladimir Ilyich and then declaims: "As long as Lenin could impose his spirit on the Party there was such a thing as Soviet art. . . ." But the good Professor should be reminded: there is no shortage of candidates for imposing the spirit of Lenin. And the best accredited candidate is the First Citizen. In addressing the writers and artists, Khrushchev quoted Mayakovsky: "We say 'Lenin' and mean the Party. We say 'the Party' and mean Lenin." And who, among the living, speaks for both Lenin and the Party? Why, of course, Comrade Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev.

Khrushchev's Model of Government

Lifting Stalin's terror brought relief but also an outburst of long pent-up bitterness. The Revolution had promised the end of the coercive power of the State: it produced a government independent of popular consent, which imprisoned and tortured and killed without restraint or reason. Would these things now change? Dissatisfaction with mere rotation of rulers expressed itself, already in 1953, in anonymous worker's doggerel:†

In March somebody murdered Stalin,
In July Beria bit the dust
But the worker's harness is just as galling
And the peasant groans fit to bust.

Party organs reported turbulence. There were even numerous Party comrades who "hasten to sing a farewell song to the State" and believe "the working masses could substitute themselves for the Party or its leadership and become a force directly determining the system of government." The Party now reminded these shallow fellows of Lenin's rejection of similar ideas, already in the early 1920's, when they were advanced by the Workers' Opposition.

Stalin had taught that, as socialism progressed toward Communism, the intensity of class-conflict would *increase*. This doctrine was now stigmatized as heretical and the source of many of Stalin's tyrannies. But as the 1950's passed into the 1960's, Khrushchev came to develop a doctrine not indeed identical with Stalin's, but parallel. This was that, as the State withered, the Party would need to be made even *stronger*. So we find Khrushchev saying, in February 1958:

> The Party . . . arose and exists not as a result of obligations of a legal order. Its development was called for by circumstances derived from political concepts, and mankind will always be in need of moral factors.

Would this, then, be the pitiful end of the Leninist utopia? Would the authoritarian State be extinguished by renaming it Party?

Efforts have, it is true, been exerted in the USSR during the past decade to enlarge what can only be described as marginal activities of local government. These activities are said to exemplify what Lenin meant in advocating "*unpaid* fulfillment of state obligations by *every* working person." Teachers and pensioners especially—everywhere easy marks for public pressure—are drawn into unpaid activities of inspection and watch-and-ward. Vigilante groups are organized, under the eye of the Party, in so-called Voluntary Police. Under a decree of April 4, 1961, popular kangaroo courts may be set up to try people accused of "leading an anti-social parasitic way of life"; such popular "collectives" may impose sentences of deportation and forced labor up to five years. These activities are reported as evidences of progress in dismantling the legal order in favor of social order. A. P. Kirilenko is even said to have gained his election to the Presidium of the Party to some degree because of his success, in Sverdlovsk Province, in fostering such public participation.

These dabblings in popular voluntarism are not substantial. It was persistently rumored, in the USSR of the late 1950's, that much more far-reaching transformations in government would shortly be forthcoming. Khrushchev permitted himself the expression, several times, that this

* "Pictures From An Exhibition," in *Survey*, July 1963.

† See the revealing paper on the moral and political ferment of the 1950's by a former Soviet citizen, David Burg, in *Survey*, October-December 1958.

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generation would live under Communism. He even told an Indian journalist that the USSR would reach Communism "between 1975 and 1980, provided there is no war." At last the end of the Leninist short transition was in sight! Now there must be a plan for the gradual withering away of the authoritarian State. And indeed it was subsequently promised that the Congress of October 1961 would be the occasion for laying out the blueprint of Communist freedom.

THE PROSPECT apparently proved too stimulating. Already in May 1961, P. Romashkin (Chairman of the Legal Institute) was appointed to issue a warning:

> . . . the Party will continue for long to exist and to work, to direct and to coordinate the activity of the disjointed system of organizations of Communist self-government, and the Party must be strengthened in every way. Moreover, until the historic task of constructing Communism has been accomplished, it must be said of the Soviet state as well that it must not be weakened. Every weakening of the socialist state in contemporary conditions entails serious dangers for Communism and for the task of peace.

The new draft Party program was published at the end of July 1961. The formalities of accepting the program were celebrated in October. On neither occasion was there the slightest indication of any change in the authoritarian character of government. The Party program again endorsed voluntarist activities. Withering away of the State was again proclaimed the goal. The program even underlined the following phrases: ". . . *by the end of the second decade* (1971–80) . . . *a Communist society will in the main be built in the USSR.*" In the Communist epoch, the program stated, "all members of society . . . will work . . . according to their own inclinations . . . not by compulsion" and not out of necessity but from moral good will. But the program explained the prior conditions for any change in the actual practice of government exactly as Stalin had:

> Historical development inevitably leads to the withering away of the state. To ensure that the state withers away completely, it is necessary to provide both internal conditions—the building of a developed Communist society—and external conditions—the victory and consolidation of socialism in the world arena.

What Communists would call "the victory and consolidation of socialism in the world arena" is not a prospect with which any human being now alive need feel personal involvement. For our century, it is surely more important that the new Party program again embodies the fundamental philosophy of Lenin in rejecting popular "spontaneity" in government and emphasizing, over and over again, the key role of the Party as the sole authoritative carrier of "consciousness":

> The Party is the brain, the honor and the conscience of our epoch. . . . Unlike all the preceding socio-economic formations, Communist society does not develop spontaneously, but as a result of the conscious and purposeful efforts of the masses led by the Marxist-Leninist Party. The Communist Party . . . which enjoys unbounded prestige among the people and understands the laws of social development, provides proper leadership in Communist construction as a whole, giving it an organized, planned and scientifically based character.

Lest any shred of misunderstanding survive, Khrushchev undertook personally to sweep into the dust-bin all ideas that the USSR was going to be governed, as long as he had any say in the matter, by any force other than the Party, now his obedient instrument. Khrushchev accomplished this task of clarification most eloquently in his speech of March 8, 1963, addressed to the writers and artists. Expressing a comprehensive authoritarian populism,* in the gifted manner of a brutalized Falstaff, this speech has a far better claim to be read widely today than Lenin's *State and Revolution*. Its first purpose is to assert a Party control over literature and the arts as unqualified as any ever claimed by Stalin. But incidentally Khrushchev also clarifies his conception of the future of government in the USSR:

> Under Communism, the will of a single man must be subordinated to that of the whole group. . . . In our time—the time of atoms, electronics, cybernetics, automation and mass production lines —clarity, ideal smoothness, and organization of all kinds of the social system are even more necessary, both in the sphere of material production and in the sphere of spiritual life. . . . The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the guiding force of socialist society. It expresses the will of the entire Soviet people. . . . The Party will remove from the path of building Communism all that stands in the way of the people's interests.

Already in November 1961 he had told the writers and artists: "Creative freedom in its Leninist meaning consists in going along in step with the people, creating spiritual values for the people, in the interest of the people. . . ."

The people is supreme. The Party speaks for the

* In a brilliant letter in the *Times Literary Supplement* of April 26, 1963, Mr. George Lichtheim brings out the kinship between this Russian authoritarian populism and the German populism of the Nazis more searchingly than I have seen it done by any other hand.

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people. I speak for the Party. "Ideal smoothness" also in "spiritual life" is my distinctive accent. I will remove all opponents from my path. This is the authentic voice of government in the USSR in the age of Khrushchev. It is Khrushchev's model of government, alike for the present and for the human future—this side of utopia.

What Is to Be Done?

Sincerity is the first battle cry in the Russian turbulence which has followed liberation from Stalin's terror. To beginning thought, perhaps a cry in which politics has little place. But the Russian authorities are wise, in their generation, to see dynamite in this demand. There is indeed another sincerity (which Hegel and the Chinese alike would understand) which disparages individual will and intelligence, appraising them as vagrant, and submits them to the march of God or History, as evidenced by what prevails in the world. There the divine or historically necessary, which commands sincere allegiance, is found in a public authority—Church, or State, or Party. But this submissive sincerity is not the dominant sincerity of our Western culture. To be sincere is, for us, something quite other than to appraise individual purpose and judgment as willful and extravagant, and therefore to reshape them earnestly in accordance with external authority. And, in this great matter, the Russians are involved in our dominant Western tradition—though with many cross-currents.

To be sincere: to form thought effortfully in my mind, accepting only the discipline of the object, not following *Pravda* or the *Wall Street Journal*; to experience and welcome emotion not included in the model of a Lenin hero or the American way of life; to see and imagine as I can, not according to the official imagery of Picasso's dove or Constitution Avenue; to refuse to shut out a reality because Marx or Christ or the Founding Fathers did not know it; to acknowledge the incomplete and unattained, the image worked on but not made, the idea reached for but not conceived. This is our nonconformist sincerity. But it is not yet politics. Such sincerity is always, at first and recurrently, a relatively solitary contest, and politics then an external and alien struggle. But, if there is a sincerity of private being, there is also a sincerity of exchange with other persons. Sincerity can hardly halt where individual mind has not yet crossed the threshhold of communication.

The Russians have here no uniqueness. In any society, an individual sincerity is fortunate if it gets off with condemnation for subjectivism, capriciousness, and vanity. It cannot presume welcome in a Kremlin or White House. But the Kremlin is least tolerant of varying sincerities. It bears with them at all only because of their constantly resurgent defense by Russian thinkers, artists, and writers. The Kremlin's own drift is toward an authoritatively declared sincerity, dressed up with populist garlands. What else is the meaning of the First Citizen's denial of the slightest tolerance for what he calls "co-existence in the realm of ideology"? He prohibits a Russian film from being shown because it suggests "unacceptable ideas and norms of social and personal life alien to the Soviet people." And he states his principle of censorship: "All that is alien to the people and is not supported by them, of course, cannot be advanced." The heart of the people is to be found in the mind of the First Citizen, and its taste is manifested in his standards. Woe to him who suggests that this people's taste may be primitive and its ideas inadequate! Behind the intellectual and aesthetic, the First Citizen sees the political: once grant the right to advance other art styles and conflicting ideas, and "It is not excluded that these people, having accumulated strength, would undertake attempts to speak against the revolutionary achievments." Indeed! The First Citizen's suspicions are well founded. The battle of sincerities is also a political battle. Honor to the Russians who defend their individual sincerities! They must always, in some degree, deny omniscience to State and Party, and they resist far greater pressures than are encountered in more libertarian societies.*

Hope continues that, in a time we cannot measure, the Soviet Union may achieve a government more welcoming of variety, more humane, and more democratic than Khrushchev's personalist party dictatorship. But we have today no rational grounds for conviction that these transformations of government will occur. On the contrary, sober minds that have pondered the years 1929 through 1945 will not be convinced that what happened in those years, or worse, cannot happen again. What a falsehood that the official Soviet press should congratulate 200,000 American marchers for Negro civil rights! How quickly Russian prisons and forced labor colonies would swallow up those who would propose to organize a march on Moscow of 200,000 persons to protest Soviet anti-Semitism!

* One of the most thoughtful and engaging groups of these resisters is described by Barbara Bode, *"Russlands Jungste Dichtergeneration,"* in *Osteuropa*, of April 1963.

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In the USSR of Khrushchev's Principate, terror is far less an instrument of government than under the rule of Stalin or in the time of Lenin. But dependence of the character of government on one person, the First Citizen, while not greater than in Stalin's day, is much greater than in Lenin's. With the passage of years, and the onset of unpredictable hard occurrence, the practice of this First Citizen may change, or another, utilizing different instruments, may take his place. The machinery of the terror remains at hand. They live under a thick blanket of comforting illusions who tell us that terrorism cannot now be restored in the USSR because terror is irrational in what they call "industrial society." Hitler's Germany of 1933 was more industrial, in occupational structure, than the USSR is today. Was Hitler's terror then rational? Or was Stalin's? They only can believe in these rationalities—sometimes called historical necessities—who are prepared to submit themselves to every event, once it has occurred, and to identify whatever has happened with the uniquely possible.

What is called "socialist legality" in the USSR has shallow roots. But indeed, under great stress, there are no deep roots for laws and liberties except moral and political convictions. Historic traditions, consolidated interests, and lawyers' techniques—all come to nothing in a high wind. Whoever doubts, should look into the ignominious history of the *Rechtsstaat* in the central Europe of our time. Not even the great historical understanding of Frederic Maitland could foresee it. In 1900, when Lenin had already formed his doctrine of "conscious" political leadership, Maitland—living in another world—could write that the German was, in part, "the most carefully considered statement of a nation's law that the world has ever seen." No doubt it was. But failing moral and political conviction, it was pulverized to dust and ashes without offering serious resistance. Russian "socialist legality" is today still an even more frail thing—a flower for fair weather. We can only hope its weakness will not soon be tested.

Some have speculated that a decisive shift toward democratic government may come, in the USSR, during a crisis of succession following the death or disability of the First Citizen. Then the inner Presidium circle, partly in the competition of personal ascendancies, partly in a struggle over alternative policies, may feel it advisable to achieve decisions with the participation of a wider public—first in the Party, later in the now embalmed Soviet system. The slogans of that time might be first "restoration of inter-Party democracy," later "back to true Soviet democracy." Under whatever verbalisms, if alternative personalities and policies were allowed to be supported, by continuing groups or trends (I deliberately avoid the words "parties" or "fractions"), the reality of a multi-party, democratic state would have been born. The forms of democratic institutions exist already in the USSR; what they lack is the reality of life and contest. But experience and reason do not permit us to believe that political transformations of such revolutionary magnitude come by gift. Only God breathed on dust and freely gave it life. In the progress of natural man, such things are achieved only by sustained effort. A crisis may then cap the issue, but only an issue long prepared. That such preparation is well underway, in the Soviet Union, must be doubted.

Anti-socialism is the slightest basis for political development in the USSR. There is indeed a widespread, genuine, and quite undoctrinal anti-socialism—among the peasantry of the collective farms. But they have no possibility of creating a political leadership. The great majority of the population has learned to believe that public ownership of the means of production is the distinctive Soviet superiority. It may be that a socialist democracy would feel no need to preserve the universality of public ownership—rural or urban. Those are, however, at most, subsequent thoughts which might arise in subsequent times. Today, who looks to anti-socialists to develop political democracy in the USSR looks to men of straw.

"Neo-Bolshevism," as it has been called (back to Lenin or beyond), is a more serious matter, though not, I think, promising of considerable political accomplishments. On its Left wing, turgid Leninist utopianism: the Revolution was betrayed; an end must really be made of all inequalities, all exploitation, all classes, all State authority; but meanwhile, of course, a cleansed Party must rule! On its Right, with the Ehrenburgs and the Yevtushenkos, again Leninist world view and Party monopoly, but more modest criticisms: demands for greater freedom in intellectual and aesthetic matters; pained sensitivity to the great differences in income, status, and opportunity in Soviet society; severe judgment of the values and selection processes of this society, which brings to the top so many time-servers, frauds, and vicious people. The neo-Bolshevist needle swings wildly from Left to Right, and somehow both poles meet and mix. Here a febrile utopian absolutism, intellectually and politically null. There ready acceptance of a slightly humanized Principate—until the day of utopia. Surely nothing in these neo-Bolshevisms that Comrade

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Khrushchev or his successor should have any great difficulty in handling!

Others, who know Russia far better than I, look for stabilizing and even democratizing forces to the Soviet plant managers, technicians, and scientists. But surely this is the wildest chimera entertained by sane minds since Thorstein Veblen dreamed that American engineers would revolt against the price system. Plant managers, technicians, and scientists are tame animals, who have never won a political skirmish more important than a basketball game. I would expect the Russian plant managers to have distinctly less influence on a determined Khrushchev than "the Ruhr barons" had on Hitler—almost none. The technicians and scientists will bother nobody if one gives them rising salaries, insignia of distinction, and smaller doses of Marxism-Leninism.

Are we then to join one gifted Russian recent emigrant and write of moral (and especially political) bankruptcy in the post-Stalin generation? I would do nothing of the kind. We have our own bankruptcies to declare, close at home, where we can make a more exact accounting of assets and liabilities. Certainly the Russian mind and personality has not been rolled flat by Stalinism or by anything else. There are many stirrings in Russia of which we know little. And we are correspondingly permitted to hope that the resources of character and intellect for political achievement, in so great a people, may prove much larger than we have been able to ascertain.

The development of Russian political institutions is the task of Russians, not Americans. The government of the United States is no beacon of light unto the gentiles. But we can abstain from dancing on Russian graves. A few years ago, a prominent American ambassador, anxious to explain that all Russians were not ogres, and that Americans had no providential mission to kill them, explained instead that the Russians, being socialists, had an order of society not very different from that of social-democratic Sweden! But it was President Truman who carried this vein to its abasing limit. In June 1948, Truman testified to what a fine type Stalin was. "I like Old Joe. He's a decent fellow. . . ."

We have now been apprised that, in addition to pounding his shoes on tables, Khrushchev tells jokes, and he plays a good game of badminton. If the diplomatic climate warms, we may anticipate a stream of stories explaining what a prince of a fellow he really is. My ancestors would have prayed, "Lord, Lord forgive us our sins!" and especially, "For the sin we have sinned before You with speech of the mouth."

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AN INTERVIEW

with

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

Within the past decade Isaac Bashevis Singer *has come to be regarded not only as the foremost living Yiddish writer but also as one of the major figures in contemporary literature.* The Manor, *his latest novel to be translated into English, will be brought out next spring by Farrar, Straus and Company.*

This interview with Mr. Singer was conducted by Joel Blocker *and* Richard Elman.

Interviewers: Perhaps we could begin by asking you some questions about what has happened to Yiddish literature. Yiddish literature was, in its prime, a body of work which was very close to the masses by whom it was read—in language, in point of view, and in drawing from a common basis of experience. The annihilation of six million Jews during World War II changed all that drastically. The Yiddish-reading audience was decimated and continues now to dwindle from attrition. How, then, do you feel about writing in Yiddish today?

Singer: You don't feel very happy about writing in a language when you know it dies from day to day. Although I don't feel that Yiddish will die completely, it's a fact that the number of readers is becoming smaller and smaller, and we—I mean Yiddish writers—are all conscious of it. The only thing is, I don't have this feeling while I write; I don't choose to remember it. I think that's a lucky thing because if I did remember while I was writing that some of my readers were dying and others were not being born to replace them, it might have some influence on me. Writers, as a rule, don't think about their readers while they write. As a matter of fact, thinking about the reader is a terrible pitfall for a writer. A writer should not think about who is going to read him because the moment he thinks about this, some other power interferes. In my case, writing Yiddish and thinking about the readers would really destroy the writer completely. But happily I never think about such things. When I sit down to write I have a feeling that I'm talking maybe to millions or maybe to nobody.

Interviewers: Nevertheless, are you and other Yiddish writers disturbed by this tragedy—not at the moment of writing, but in general?

Singer: We are all conscious of it when we are not writing. There is a lot of discussion about it in the Yiddish papers and in meetings of the PEN Club. We all feel the same thing and we express it in Yiddish by saying: "We talk to the wall." We sometimes have the feeling that we are talking to nobody. On the other hand, I can tell you that those people who still read Yiddish are a peculiarly sensitive group. No writer gets the response a Yiddish writer does, if the readers really like him. The Yiddish reader, as a rule, is either very bad or very good. There is no such thing as a neutral reader. Either he loves the writer or he hates him. I have had good luck writing in the Yiddish paper, the *Jewish Daily Forward.* This paper still has eighty or ninety thousand readers and many of them—as a matter of fact, most of them—are readers of fiction. I still have a lot of readers and have the feeling sometimes that I am talking to thousands of people. I know, for example, that my novel, *The Slave,* which the *Forward* ran in its week-end literary supplement, had an audience of twenty thousand readers. Not many writers have such an immediate audience.

Interviewers: Then writing in Yiddish today has its advantages as well? You're not completely "talking to the wall"? In fact, you're probably better off than most serious American writers today who have no immediate mass audience of that size. If a writer in this country does enjoy such readership, it is not of the same kind as your Yiddish-reading audience.

Singer: I must say that the *Jewish Daily Forward* has a tradition of publishing good fiction. Its editors have always considered it a very important part of the newspaper. Our readers ask for fiction. It isn't like American newspapers. The New York *Daily News,* for example, also publishes fiction, but I don't think the *News* would lose many readers if it stopped publishing stories. The Yiddish reader is accustomed to reading novels and stories in the newspapers. For him, it's a must. In this respect, we are lucky.

Interviewers: Do you see any future for Yiddish literature?

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Singer: The future looks very black. They say that if a Yiddish reader dies, there is no one to replace him. This is true. How it happens that the *Forward* still has eighty to a hundred thousand readers today, and the *Jewish Day Journal,* another Yiddish newspaper, has close to fifty thousand is a riddle to me because twenty-five or even thirty-five years ago they said the Yiddish press would only last another five years. One of the greatest pessimists then was Abraham Cahan who helped build the *Forward.* He said that the first generation of Jews in this country would speak Yiddish, but the second generation would not. It was so, but somehow the Yiddish press goes on living. It's like the Jews generally. They die all the time and they keep on living all the time.

Interviewers: If that's the case, who then are you writing for—this still considerable Yiddish audience, a different audience in English and other languages, or both?

Singer: As I said before, I'm not very conscious of the audience. The only audience I'm conscious of—you may laugh at me—is myself. I have to please myself. After I have written something I am the first reader. I'm most interested in pleasing myself. It's not modest to say so, but I think this is so with every writer. In my case this is especially important because Yiddish readers are not a homogeneous audience. They are of different kinds, some very educated, some not educated at all. For example, we have readers who will read good fiction, but their intelligence is so small and their taste so dubious that you just don't know how they will judge and what they will accept. We get letters at the *Forward* from readers who say, "I read the wonderful novel of Sholem Asch. I also read the wonderful novel of —," referring to some mediocre detective story we might publish at the same time. To him they are both alike. Yet we also have very many perceptive readers who know world literature and are very sensitive to literary values. That's why when a Yiddish writer worries about his audience he gets all mixed up.

Interviewers: You don't at all—somewhere in the back of your mind—have an image of someone reading you in a foreign language—English, for example?

Singer: That's a very important question. They accused Sholem Asch of writing for the translator. I don't say the accusation was true, but there were those who pointed to specific passages in Asch's work and said: "You see these lines. They were written for the English, not for the Yiddish reader." I take great care not to think about the reader in English or French or any other language. Nothing can spoil a writer more than writing for the translator. He must feel that he writes for people who know everything he knows—not for the stranger. It's only when you write for your own people and when you don't think about anybody else that the other people reading in a foreign language will appreciate your work and like it. Can you imagine Gogol writing for the French or the American reader? He was a Russian and wrote like a Russian and assumed that the reader knew everything he knew. You know, many of my Yiddish readers complain that I am too Jewish. They say: "We have already forgotten about all these things." "You remind us of things we would like to forget." But this doesn't bother me. I assume that the reader knows as much about Jewishness and Jewish life as I do.

Interviewers: Would it be fair to say that you are actually writing in a somewhat artificial or illusionary context, as if none of the terrible things that happened to the Jewish people during the last two decades really did occur?

Singer: Yes, very fair. There was a famous philosopher, Vaihinger, who wrote a book called *The Philosophy of "As If,"* in which he showed that we all behave "as if." The "as if" is so much a part of our life that it really isn't artificial. After all, what could be more artificial than marriage? When a man marries a woman he assumes that she's going to be devoted to him and he acts as if his wife will treat him in this fashion. And so on and so on . . . Every man assumes he will go on living. He behaves *as if* he will never die. So I wouldn't call my attitude artificial. It's very natural and healthy. We have to go on living and writing.

Interviewers: But you do agree that at the heart of your attitude there is an illusion which is consciously sustained?

Singer: Yes. But take the case of a mathematician who writes a book and knows that there are only ten or twenty other mathematicians who will understand him. Still he doesn't write for twenty people. He knows there will be mathematicians in later generations. Every man who creates something does not and should not worry about being understood. I would say I write for the best possible reader no matter how many readers there really are.

Interviewers: Then you're not really a popular writer in Yiddish, just as in English those critics who originally acclaimed your work were part of an avant-garde rather than a mass audience?

Singer: No. I'm not a popular writer among Yiddish readers. As a matter of fact I had many quarrels with Abe Cahan who told me: "You write well, but it's not for our readers." Even my present editor at the *Forward* sometimes complains that my language is too difficult, my subjects too obscure. And when I write about devils and ghosts, for instance, he asks: "Who among our readers remembers such things?" No, I'm not a popular writer. But the truth is, in

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spite of this, I have become, to a degree, "popular." Still, my work is only published in the week-end supplements which are devoted to literary works, rather than the regular week-day pages in which appears conventionally popular fiction.

Occasionally, however, I write more popular work under a different name—under the name of Warshofsky. Generally I sign my name in the *Forward* Isaac Bashevis, but once in a while I publish under the name of Isaac Warshofsky. When I write under the name of Warshofsky I take less care, but I never publish such things in book form. I use a different name to distinguish between two different kinds of writing. Since I must write a great deal and I cannot work on every piece of writing the way I work on the stories which I take very seriously, I publish some pieces which I consider belle-lettristic journalism. It sometimes happens that some of them come out well. In fact, one of my books, *Mein Taten's Bes-din Shtub* ("My Father's Courtroom") * is a compilation of this kind of work, published under the name of Warshofsky. Only later I adopted it, as it were, and signed the name Bashevis . . . after I cleaned it up and worked on it.

Interviewers: Is it a common practice among Yiddish writers to use pseudonyms?

Singer: It's not uncommon. I. L. Peretz wrote under many different names. Some say as many as fifty pseudonyms.

Interviewers: And you make a definite distinction between your literary and your journalistic work?

Singer: Yes I do. I must say I don't work very hard on my journalism. I just write it and let it go. I write memoirs of my boyhood, reviews, *feuilletons,* and all kinds of things. As a matter of fact many of my readers like my journalism better than my stories, and some of my best stories were never published in the *Forward.* For example, "Gimpel the Fool" was first published in a Yiddish literary magazine.

Interviewers: About this business of names again. What is your real name?

Singer: My real name is Isaac Singer. My brother's name was Israel Joshua Singer. In Yiddish I sign my fiction Isaac Bashevis. For some reason this name is sacred to me, and I won't sign my journalism with it. Perhaps it's because Bashevis is derived from my mother's name. Her name was Bathsheba.

Interviewers: To come back to Yiddish literature for a few moments. Do you regard yourself as writing within that specific tradition, or do you feel that you have been more influenced by non-Jewish European authors?

Singer: I'll tell you, I feel myself naturally a part of the Jewish tradition. Very strongly so! But I wouldn't say I feel myself a part of the Yiddish tradition. Somehow I always wanted to write in my own way, and I never felt that I was somebody's disciple. For instance, Sholem Aleichem, who was a great writer, always used to say that he was a disciple of Mendele Mocher Seforim. That was very modest. But I don't have these feelings. The only person I have a lot to thank for—from whom I learned a great deal—was my brother, I. J. Singer, who was ten years older than I. But even here I wouldn't say I was my brother's disciple. I would almost say that I tried to create my own tradition, if one can use such words.

Interviewers: Then what do you think you *did* learn from your brother?

Singer: My brother wrote a number of novels— *The Brothers Ashkenazi,* which was translated into English; also *Yoshe Kalb,* which was translated under the name of *The Sinner,* and many others. I learned a lot from my brother, particularly in regard to construction. I consider him a great master of construction, and his writing was always quite close to me. Much more so than Sholem Asch's, for example. So whatever there was to learn from my brother I learned, and I think it was a lot. My brother always used to say to me that a writer should not mix the essay with fiction. Many writers are half essayists and half fiction writers. Thomas Mann, for example. He writes a story, and in the middle of the story he inserts an essay or an article. He is himself both the writer and the critic. Even a writer like Dostoevski used to do this. In *The Brothers Karamazov,* while he is describing Father Zosima, he suddenly inserts a whole essay on what a saint is and what a saint should be. It is the old-fashioned way of writing. My brother always used to call this a literary mannerism. It's true that the great novelists used this in a successful way. But for a young writer, a modern writer, it's not the best model. I avoid these things. When I tell a story, I tell a story. I don't try to discuss, criticize, or analyze my characters.

Interviewers: Apparently, your brother was very much aware of Flaubert's dicta on the purity of the novel?

Singer: Yes, you're right. I think in this case I also agree one hundred per cent with Flaubert—when you tell a story, tell a story. Use the words that give information about your characters, but don't talk about them. When I write about a character I will say that he looked so and so and behaved so and so, but I won't say he was a good man. Sometimes I read writers who say their characters are "noble" men. To me this is ridiculous. If the man was truly noble this should come across from what you tell about him. It's up to the reader to judge.

* See the four selections published in the January 1962 and April 1962 issues of COMMENTARY.

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Interviewers: Along these lines, then, do you consider yourself to be a "modern" or a "modernistic" writer? The American critic, Irving Howe, has tried to define this modernistic element in your work.* Do you feel this was just?

Singer: When I read Mr. Howe's piece I was greatly surprised to find myself described as modernistic. First of all, it never occurred to me that I was a "modernist." Secondly, I don't know what a modernist is. This word . . . you cannot define it. What is modern today will be traditional twenty years from now. When Mr. Howe called me modernistic, I assume he meant that I write in a way similar to other contemporary writers. Maybe you could tell me. What does it mean to be a "modernist"?

Interviewers: Well, perhaps it means your work is different from traditional Yiddish writing. For instance, there are certain conventions that Sholem Aleichem uses that don't appear in your writing. One example would be the "dear reader" device, the writer addressing the reader directly.

Singer: Yes. I try not to use the "dear reader." It's curious, however, when I write under the name of Warshofsky in an article or memoir, then it pops up when I need to make a connection of some sort. But in real fiction the "dear reader" device is always a trick, a substitute for telling the story. It's only when the writer can't think of anything else or has some spiritual interruption that he resorts to "dear reader"—as if to say, "Dear reader, forgive me for not telling the story the right way."

Interviewers: Do you mind if we ask a few biographical questions at this point? You were born in 1904 in Poland and grew up in Warsaw. Warsaw at that time, during the first two decades of the century, was a center of Yiddish writing. Did you go to the University in Warsaw?

Singer: No. But I studied in a rabbinical seminary which was a kind of college.

Interviewers: How old were you?

Singer: I must have been about eighteen.

Interviewers: What did the studies encompass?

Singer: We studied secular as well as religious subjects and the Hebrew language. I never finished the seminary because a lot of the things they taught there I knew already. My knowledge of secular subjects was backward, but in religious matters I knew a great deal. My family was very religious. My father was a rabbi. So were both of my grandfathers.

Interviewers: Were they Hasidic rabbis?

Singer: My father was and his father as well. But my maternal grandfather was an anti-Hasid, a *misnaged*. There was always a conflict between my father and my mother about Hasidism because my mother was a little bit of a skeptic where that was concerned—especially about the *zaddikim*, "the wonder-rabbis." My father always used to say that if you don't believe in the *zaddikim* today, tomorrow you won't believe in God. My mother would say, it's one thing to believe in God and another to believe in a man. My mother's point of view is also my point of view.

Interviewers: But did your family want you to be a rabbi?

Singer: Very much so. But I made up my mind very early not to be one because I began to doubt, not the power of God, but all the traditions and dogmas. I saw how one sentence in the Bible was made into volumes and volumes in the Talmud and later books. From my earliest childhood I had a feeling that one thing was God and the Higher Powers, which are above us and with us, and another thing is what human beings make of the divine. I think that many of the misunderstandings of religion stem from this . . . the failure to distinguish between God and man.

Interviewers: What kind of boyhood did you have? Many of your books portray urban lower-class Jewry in Poland. Were you, a rabbi's son, exposed to this as a boy?

Singer: Yes. We lived on a very poor street in Warsaw, Krochmalna Street. Naturally I was in contact with poor people. Many of them used to come to my father for advice. Many of their questions were religious and moral, but they had a direct bearing on everyday life. Many of the women used to come and tell stories of woe to my mother. I always listened, and I had plenty of chances to listen, to poor people and rich people. My father was a *dayan*, a kind of a judge. So people used to come with all kinds of business problems and conflicts, and I remember trying to decide for myself which of them was honest and which of them was dishonest.

Interviewers: Well, is the clan you describe in *The Family Moskat* a family you knew in the Warsaw of that day, or is it purely invention?

Singer: No. It was invented. It is true that there was such a rich family in Warsaw in those days, and many people have thought that I was describing this family, but it isn't so. *The Family Moskat* is a composite of many families I knew.

Interviewers: What do you think first impelled you to write?

Singer: There was one important circumstance: My brother was a writer. My father was also a

* "Demonic Fiction of a Yiddish 'Modernist,'" COMMENTARY, October 1960.

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writer. He published religious books. So writing and publishing were always familiar. However, the real reason for wanting to write was that I very often met situations which baffled me, and from the moment I knew that there was such a thing as literature, I thought how wonderful it would be to be able to describe such things. Incidentally, some of these situations now seem not as unusual as they seemed at the time. When I was about twelve years old I began to read worldly books. Before that I had read only Hebrew books. Well, the first worldly book that I read was a Sherlock Holmes collection by Conan Doyle in a Yiddish translation, and I cannot tell you how delighted I was with this book. I'm afraid even today to try and read it again because I know I would be disappointed. Every story of Sherlock Holmes sounded to me then like heavenly music. Something only an angel could write. As a matter of fact, I tried to imitate Sherlock Holmes. I considered myself a detective. I remember once walking in Warsaw and seeing a man who I immediately thought was suspicious. I said to myself, this man is suspicious. There was no reason whatsoever for me to believe this, but I followed him over half of Warsaw. After a while the man began to look back. At that moment I was Sherlock Holmes and I hoped that he would commit a murder and that I would catch him, and so on and so on.

Interviewers: This familiarity with criminals and their behavior comes across very strongly in *The Magician of Lublin*. . . .

Singer: Now that you say so, I think you are right, but it would never have occurred to me. This is the reason that critics sometimes know more than writers.

Interviewers: When did you begin to write seriously?

Singer: Let me continue with what I was saying before. One day my brother brought home a copy of Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment* in Yiddish . . .

Interviewers: Also a detective story. . . .

Singer: Yes. But I understood very little of it. I was just too young. I knew that the hero had committed a murder, but that's all. There is one moment in the book where the District Attorney speaks to Raskolnikov and Raskolnikov suddenly gets up and is ready to leave and then he sits down again. When I read these few lines I thought how wonderful this was. I don't know why this made such an impression on me. . . . Now you ask, when did I begin to write: When I was about sixteen I began to write in Hebrew, not in Yiddish. I wrote terrible poems, although they were admired because the Hebrew was good. Then, after a while, I began to write stories, again in Hebrew. I even published a few in a Hebrew newspaper. But later I saw that writing Hebrew was an artificial thing because there was a lot of dialogue in my writing, and as my characters spoke Yiddish, I had to translate what they said into Hebrew—which was not a living language at that time. So, after a while, I said to myself: What am I, a writer or a translator? And I came to the conclusion that I must write in Yiddish because it was my mother language and the language of the people I wanted to write about. Since then I have written mostly in Yiddish. Wait—here's something more I remember, a very interesting thing. Even before I learned to read and write, as a child, I liked to imitate my father and my brother. I used to take a pen and scribble on paper. All week long I would scribble and when Saturday came I had to stop. This for me was an ordeal—to have to wait until the Sabbath ended so that I could continue my smearing. Why? I don't know even today.

Interviewers: You once told us that during your adolescence you spent three or four years in your grandfather's village, and that this was a strong influence in determining your future as a writer.

Singer: Yes. Because this town was very old-fashioned. Not much had changed there in many generations. In this town the traditions of hundreds of years ago still lived. There was no railroad nearby. It was stuck in the forest and it was pretty much the same as it must have been during the time of Chmielnicki. I learned a lot about Jewishness in this town. The town was called Bilgoray. I could have written *The Family Moskat* (which takes place in Warsaw) without having lived in Bilgoray, but I could never have written *Satan in Goray* or some of my other stories without having been there.

Interviewers: Why? What did you do there?

Singer: I studied the Talmud. I studied the Bible. I studied Cabbala, although it was forbidden. According to the Law, a man should not study Cabbala before he is thirty, but I used to remove the books from the study house. In fact, I almost stole them. I took them to my house and read them often. I was fascinated by the Cabbala.

Interviewers: Considering all this, how did your parents react to your wanting to be a writer?

Singer: It was a great shock to them. They considered all the secular writers to be heretics, all unbelievers—they really were too, most of them. To become a *literat* was to them almost as bad as becoming a *meshumed*, one who forsakes the faith. My father used to say that secular writers like Peretz were leading the Jews to heresy. He said everything they wrote was against God. Even though Peretz wrote in a religious vein, my father called his writing "sweetened poison," but poison nevertheless. And from his point of view, he was right.

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Everybody who read such books sooner or later became a worldly man and forsook the traditions. In my family, of course, my brother had gone first, and I went after him. For my parents, this was a tragedy.

Interviewers: You and your brother left Poland about 1935, your brother first. Why did you leave, and were you able to pick up right away and continue writing?

Singer: Yes. We were both pessimists. We both believed that it was inevitable after Hitler came to power that the Germans would invade Poland.

When I came to this country I lived through a terrible disappointment. I felt then—more than I believe now—that Yiddish had no future in this country. In Poland, Yiddish was still very much alive when I left. When I came here it seemed to me that Yiddish was finished: it was very depressing. The result was that for five or six or maybe seven years I couldn't write a word. Not only didn't I publish anything in those years, but writing became so difficult a chore that my grammar was affected. I couldn't write a single worthwhile sentence. I became like a man who was a great lover and is suddenly impotent, knowing at the same time that ultimately he will regain his power. I shouldn't have even tried to write anything, but I did try, again and again, without success. The novel I tried to write then I eventually threw away. In later years when I looked at it I was startled to find that it was the work of an illiterate man—and this was after I had written *Satan in Goray* and knew Yiddish fairly well. It was a real case of amnesia. One has to get a very great blow to act in such a way. But after a while I got over it, just like that lover whom I spoke of. I've seen this phenomenon at work in other writers. For example, those Yiddish writers who went to Russia, hoping that Communism would help them in some way, became so disappointed that some of them could not even write a single worthwhile sentence. Bergelson, who was a good writer, published a book in Russia called *Birobijan*. When I read this book I had the same feeling that I had in reading the stuff I wrote upon first coming to America. The man couldn't write a word. It wasn't merely a question of style.

Interviewers: At that time, did it ever occur to you to write in English?

Singer: I used to play with the idea, but never seriously. Never. I always knew that a writer has to write in his own language or not at all.

Interviewers: Did you ever think of going to Palestine in 1935?

Singer: Yes. I did think about it. But since I wanted to write in Yiddish and I knew that in Palestine Hebrew was the spoken and written language of the Jews, I decided not to. I could never really think seriously about going to Palestine even though I knew that Yiddish had no real future here. Perhaps I was selfish. I chose Yiddish not because I was a *Yiddishist,* but because I felt that this was the best way for me to express myself.

Interviewers: About the time that you were growing up in Warsaw, Jewish radical movements of one sort or another had a very strong influence. Jewish socialism in the form of Bundism was a powerful movement, and of course the Zionist movement was burgeoning. Did you ever feel yourself attracted to any of these groups?

Singer: For some strange reason, just as I was skeptical about religious dogma, so was I skeptical about political dogmas. Certainly I was very close to these people, and maybe that was the trouble: you know, sometimes when you see the cook, the food doesn't seem very appetizing. While the ideologies sounded very attractive, I was close enough to see who was preaching them and how these people fought for power among themselves. The truth is, if you ask me, that the aches and troubles of this world cannot be cured by any system. Nevertheless, there are better and worse systems. Democracy seems to me to be one of the better systems, and there is no system which gives more power to the devil than Communism.

As for Zionism, I always believed in it. I think that Israel is a great hope for the Jewish people. But it is true that just as I knew the socialist cooks, I knew some of the Zionist cooks in Poland. . . . Yet, in the case of Zionism, I felt that whoever the cook was, the food was wholesome. It is true that when I was in Israel five years ago, I found there things which I didn't like. But you find these things in your own home or in your own heart. Am I so delighted with myself and with my writing?

I always felt about the Soviet Union that it would never come to any good. From its very beginning it was a butcher shop, and it has remained so even today . . . even if there has been some "improvement." When people have extreme power over other people, it's a terrible thing. I always pray to God (and I do pray because I am in my way a religious man), don't give me any power over any other human beings. I have always avoided this kind of power like the plague. As a book reviewer, I sometimes have some power and it is my hope that someday I will be able to stop reviewing books, because even this little bit of power I inevitably abuse. You know, I review the easier books first or I leave the more difficult ones for last. I do what is easier for me, and in this way I abuse my power.

Interviewers: Can we talk a little about translations now, the translations of your books? Do you feel

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that much of what you have written comes across in English translation?

Singer: I am very happy about my books being translated into English. In English my audience is a very real one. I don't have to assume or imagine it. It's not *as if*. And of course many of my English readers are intelligent Jews who know no other language, and I am very happy to reach them. I always take this business of being translated seriously. I am very scrupulous about English translations. Even though my knowledge of English is small, I always felt from the moment I found an American publisher that I wanted to work hard on the translations, because when I read some of the Yiddish writers in English, particularly some of Sholem Aleichem, I knew how bad translation could be. It was so bad you couldn't read it. So I made up my mind that I would contribute as much as I could to the effort. For years I worked together with the translators on *The Family Moskat*. Incidentally, by working on that translation, I learned the little English I know. Since that time I have taken part in the translation of every one of my books. I think only in this way can a translation come out bearable. I say "bearable," because you know just as much as I do that writers inevitably lose a great deal in translation. A friend of mine, also a Yiddish writer, once came to me for some advice. He thought that because I had been translated into English I could advise him on a translation of his own book. I told him that he must be prepared to lose at least 40 per cent in translation, and to make sure that the other 60 per cent had some worth. Or better still, to write something 140 per cent. . . .

Translation is an endless process, really. Every translation, like every book, is a problem in itself. The same translator can do a good job on one book and a bad job on another. Nevertheless, good translation is possible, but it involves hard work for the writer, the translator, and the editor. I don't think that a translation is ever really finished. To me the translation becomes as dear as the original.

Interviewers: Well, you've been a translator yourself, haven't you? Did you take as much care with other men's work?

Singer: I must confess, no. I did most of my translations as a young man, and frankly I don't think they are very good. I translated *The Magic Mountain*, Stefan Zweig, Remarque, all these from the German. I also translated from Polish and Hebrew. Although my translations were generally praised, I really didn't work as hard on them as I should have. I think *now* I would do a much better job because I have learned what it can mean.

Interviewers: What did you do with that chapter in French in *The Magic Mountain?* Did you leave it in French, as was done in the English translation?

Singer: No. I didn't because French can't be transliterated easily into Yiddish, which uses Hebrew characters. But since it was bad French I had to translate it into bad Yiddish. You don't have to make a great effort to write bad Yiddish.

Interviewers: While we're on the subject of translations, it seems that the six books of yours which have been translated into English fall into two categories. One of these is the kind of writing best exemplified by *The Family Moskat*, that is, rather straightforward, realistic narrative; in this case, a family chronicle. *The Magician of Lublin* is also somewhat like this. But *Satan in Goray* and most of your stories seem to have a different quality altogether. They are much more stylized; they emphasize folk elements, particularly the demonic and the supernatural. Now our question is this: is this division of your translated work, as we've outlined it, representative of your total output?

Singer: In asking the question that way, you also answer it. . . . It is true that my work does fall into two such categories. The reason is simple: sometimes I feel like writing about the supernatural, in a symbolic way, and I also feel that there is a place for the realistic method. These two categories are not mutually exclusive; they are only two sides of the same coin. The world can be looked at one way or another, and the theme of a story determines its style. What I have had translated thus far is a good part of my work, but there are still many things which have not been translated and published. For instance, I have written a novel called *Der Hoyf* in Yiddish. In English I originally wanted to call it "The Beginning," because it deals with what we spoke about earlier: the beginning of socialism and Zionism in Poland. But it will probably be called "The Manor." The translation is now being completed. It is a large book written more or less in the style of *The Family Moskat*. There is another book which I have written about Jewish life in America. It's called "Shadows by the Hudson" and it's again written in a different style, a kind of combination of the two styles.

Interviewers: Why don't you tell us something about "Shadows by the Hudson." Isn't this one of the very few things you've written about America?

Singer: Yes. "Shadows by the Hudson" is a story of a group of people who came to this country at the end of the Second World War or immediately thereafter and settled on the Upper West Side of New York—on Riverside Drive, West End Avenue, Broadway and so forth. While they live here, their minds and spirits are still in the old country, although, at the same time, they take roots here in New York. The times are mixed up and they are mixed up, and their story is full of confusion, unusual love stories. In fact, I think it's an unusual kind of novel.

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Interviewers: What are you working on now?

Singer: A book called "A Ship to America." This is the first time I've ever written a novel in the first person. It has autobiographical elements, but it isn't autobiography. It begins in Poland in 1935, but most of the book takes place in New York. It's the story of a writer who comes to this country, loses his passport, and becomes, against his own will and intentions, an illegal visitor. In 1939, he gets his first papers and a permit to go abroad. On the eve of the Second World War, he goes back to Poland to marry his lover and bring her, and his son by another woman, back to America. I won't tell you the end, because the book is now being serialized in the *Forward* on Fridays and Saturdays.

As for the style, I would say it's different from anything I've done before. Writing in the first person is a new experience for me, and creates new problems in description and construction. The idea that writing in the first person is easier than in the third person is far from true. It is a style with many possible pitfalls and demands more caution from a writer. One of the chief dangers of such a novel is that it always threatens to become a mere memoir.

Interviewers: Now what about this folk element in your work? What use do you feel you are making of it, and how do you regard the so-called demonic trait?

Singer: There are two reasons for this: one is literary and the other is more than literary. The more than literary reason is that I really believe there are spirits in this world, and that man has a soul, and that the soul is not the only spiritual entity in this world. I really believe that. Of course, many people, Jews and Christians alike, have believed in demons and spirits. But that's not why I believe in them. I truly believe that there are forces and spirits in this world, about which we know very little, which influence our lives. A hundred years from now, when people know more about other things, they will also know more about these spiritual powers. I believe that psychical research is a science of the future, not the past. I find it very easy to believe in reincarnation, possession by devils, and other such things. We have many proofs that these things exist.

Interviewers: Then why is it that you are so cynical about Hertz Yanovar and his group of spiritists in *The Family Moskat?*

Singer: *I* am not. It is my characters who are skeptical about this group. All the skepticism belongs to Asa Heshel and his wife. Still, I myself am a little skeptical about spiritism. Why? Because this is already a planned business. You sit down at a table and call forth a spirit. I don't believe that a spirit can just be called forth to order. In the same way, I don't believe that a man can just sit down and write a great poem. It won't work; it's not so easy. Spiritism has become a money-making thing, a kind of church, a dogma. So I don't believe in it; but I do believe that it is possible for a human being to see a spirit in a spontaneous way. This perhaps explains why I write critically about spiritism in *The Family Moskat.*

Interviewer: Just for the record, have you yourself ever had what you would call a spiritual or supernatural experience?

Singer: Never, really. But other people, whom I trust, have. And I have read a lot about such things. If there is any field of knowledge in which I am some kind of scholar, it is psychic research. I have read a great deal on this subject, in English and other languages.

Interviewers: Are you familiar with Yeats's mysticism, with theosophy and Rosicrucianism?

Singer: No, I don't know Yeats. But I've read Madame Blavatsky. But let me come back to the literary reason for my use of the demonic and supernatural. First, it helps me to express myself. For example, by using Satan or a demon as a symbol, one can compress a great many things. It's a kind of spiritual stenography. It gives me more freedom. For another thing, the demons and Satan represent to me, in a sense, the ways of the world. Instead of saying this is the way things happen, I will say, this is the way demons behave. Demons symbolize the world for me, and by that I mean human beings and human behavior; and since I really believe in their existence—that is, not only symbolically but substantively—it is easy to see how this kind of literary style was born. I really love this style and I am always finding new symbols and new stories. In *The Slave,* for example, I was unable to write about Jewish demons because this was primarily a story about Polish gentiles. Consequently, I found out all about Polish demonology. It fascinated me. Writers, as a matter of fact, fall in love with things like that, just as men fall in love with women. And certain things repeat themselves in every serious writer. I would say that every serious writer is possessed by certain ideas or symbols, and I am possessed by my demons and they add a lot to my vision and my expression.

Interviewers: You say that these demons and Satan symbolize the world for you. Now in many of your stories—like *Satan in Goray,* "The Mirror," and "The Diary of One Not Yet Born"—these imps, demons, devils, and what have you triumph either partially or completely. This would seem to make you a kind of "devil's advocate." Perhaps you mean to imply that evil is triumphing over good in man.

Singer: In many cases, it does; and in many cases, it doesn't. From experience we know that it happens often in this world—I'm not speaking now of the

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next world—that evil is victorious. Wouldn't you say that Hitler's success was the triumph of evil? Certainly, he almost reached his goal. And those Germans who went along with him, in his evil ways, have not been punished. On the other hand, the good sometimes prevails. In my story, "Gimpel the Fool," Satan tells Gimpel to do a nasty thing. Gimpel does so, and then reneges on the devil. So you see, I make no rules; evil doesn't always triumph and it isn't always defeated. Once you establish a rule, it's against literature and against life.

Interviewers: What you're saying is that you are writing morality stories, more realistic examples, perhaps, than some of the old-fashioned morality tales, but in essence, stories of good and evil.

Singer: I would not characterize my stories as morality tales, but rather as being constructed around a moral point of view. Perhaps only *The Magician of Lublin* could be called a true morality tale. In this book, I had more of an "axe to grind." It's true that when I write I don't look at the world as if it is beyond judgment. I do judge, not always explicitly, but more often implicitly. I even would go so far as to say that any writer who does not think in terms of good and evil cannot go very far in his writing. This is a tragedy in much of modern writing; authors have ceased to look upon life from the eternal point of view of good and evil. They look upon life in a purely scientific way; they say that such circumstances create such people and such people behave so. The moment a writer begins to regard life from a behavioristic point of view, the writing falls flat and the writer descends to the level of his own characters. As the Talmud expresses it: *les din, les dayan,* there is no judgment and no judge. My judgment is that good does not always triumph, that this is very far from being the best of all possible worlds. That's why all my Jews are not good Jews. Why should they be any different than anybody else? The Cabbalists say this world is the worst of all possible worlds. They believe there are millions of worlds, but the worst is this one. Here is the very darkness itself. How can you expect that in the blackest darkness, in the deepest abyss of all, everything should turn out nice and proper? From a Cabbalistic point of view, I'm a very realistic writer. . . .

Interviewer: This is the second time you've mentioned the Cabbala. Have you read other mystical or occult works?

Singer: Well, I've read all the classic works of spiritism and occultism—not only the old ones, but the modern scientific books. *The Phantasms of the Living* by Gurney and Myers, which is a classic; there's another one, too, about life after death. These were both written in the 1880's in England, when the Society for Psychical Research was created. These were people of great integrity, and they did a great deal of research. You would be surprised at some of the things they discovered. Nowadays psychic research is undergoing a kind of crisis; but at the end of the last century it flourished. Yet even today there are many serious people engaged in it. You know that William James believed in occultism. Once you begin to study these things you are faced with the fact that here is an uncharted ocean of knowledge.

Interviewers: Do you know personally many of the people engaged in psychic research?

Singer: No, I do not. And I will tell you why: there is no field in which so many liars and charlatans abound as in this one. Let's not fool ourselves: there are so many that it is incredible. But they have somehow managed not to utterly destroy legitimate psychic research, just as literature has not been destroyed by its numerous bad practitioners, by, say, the two hundred or so bad writers scribbling away in Brooklyn or the Bronx, in Paris and San Francisco. Both of these fields are good ones for liars and charlatans; they can really go to town. In the case of psychic research people, there is much obvious nonsense. They publish magazines about people who visit other planets and come down to tell whom they met there. I am not so foolish as to believe all these fakers. Still, I do read their magazines. I find their lies interesting. If nothing else, they are revealing fantasies. I do believe, however, in phenomena like clairvoyant dreams, extrasensory perception, and the like. And I think these things are all reflections of Higher Powers, whether divine or otherwise, of powers which surround us and are at work all the time.

Interviewers: Of course, then, you believe in God.

Singer: Yes, I do. I'm not, however, an observant Jew. I believe in God but not in man insofar as he claims God has revealed himself to him. If a man came to me and tells me he has been to the planet Mars, I would call him a liar, but I would not stop believing in the existence of the planet. I believe that the Higher Powers do not reveal themselves so easily; you have to search for them. Consequently, I have no faith in dogmas of any kind; they are only the work of men. Man is born to free choice, to believe, to doubt, or to deny. I choose to believe. I also believe in the power of personal prayer. While I shun organized prayer and religion, I would call myself a religious man. The Higher Powers, I am convinced, are always with us, at every moment, everywhere, except, perhaps, at the meetings of Marxists and other left-wingers. There is no God there; they have passed a motion to that effect.

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EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG

THE MODERN HIGH SCHOOL: A PROFILE

NOT FAR from Los Angeles, though rather nearer to Boston, may be located the town of Milgrim, in which Milgrim High School is clearly the most costly and impressive structure. Milgrim is not a suburb. Although it is only fifty miles from a large and dishonorable city and a part of its conurbation, comparatively few Milgrimites commute to the city for work. Milgrim is an agricultural village which has outgrown its nervous system; its accustomed modes of social integration have not yet even begun to relate its present, recently acquired inhabitants to one another. So, though it is not a suburb, Milgrim is not a community either.

Milgrim's recent, fulminating growth is largely attributable to the rapid development of light industry in the outer suburbs, with a resulting demand for skilled labor. But within the past few years, further economic development has created a steady demand for labor that is not so skilled. In an area that is by no means known for its racial tolerance or political liberalism, Milgrim has acquired, through no wish of its own, a sizable Negro and Puerto Rican minority. On the shabby outskirts of town, a number of groceries label themselves Spanish-American. The advanced class in Spanish at Milgrim High School makes a joyful noise—about the only one to be heard.

Estimates of the proportion of the student body at Milgrim who are, in the ethnocentric language of demography, non-white, vary enormously. Some students who are clearly middle-class and of pinkish-gray color sometimes speak as if they themselves were a besieged minority. More responsible staff members produce estimates of from 12 to 30 per cent. Observations in the corridors and lunchrooms favor the lower figure. They also establish clearly that the non-whites are orderly and well behaved, though somewhat more forceful in their movements and manner of speech than their light-skinned colleagues.

What is Milgrim High like? It is a big, expensive building, on spacious but barren grounds. Every door is at the end of a corridor; there is no reception area, no public space in which one can adjust to the transition from the outside world. Between class periods the corridors are tumultuously crowded; during them they are empty. But at both times they are guarded by teachers and students on patrol duty. Patrol duty does not consist primarily in the policing of congested throngs of moving students, or the guarding of property from damage. Its principal function is the checking of corridor passes. Between classes, no student may walk down the corridor without a form, signed by a teacher, telling where he is coming from, where he is going, and the time, to the minute, during which the pass is valid. A student caught in the corridor without such a pass is sent or taken to the office; there a detention slip is made out against him, and he is required to remain after school for two or three hours. He may do his homework during this time, but he may not leave his seat or talk.

There is no physical freedom whatever at Milgrim. Except during class breaks, the lavatories are kept locked, so that a student must not only obtain a pass but find the custodian and induce him to open the facility. Indeed Milgrim High's most memorable arrangements are its corridor passes and its johns; they dominate social interaction. "Good morning, Mr. Smith," an attractive girl will say pleasantly to one of her teachers in the corridor. "Linda, do you have a pass to be in your locker after the bell rings?" is his greeting in reply. There are more classifications of washrooms than there must have been in the Confederate Navy. The common sort, marked just "Boys" and "Girls," are generally locked. Then there are some

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marked, "Teachers, Men" and "Teachers, Women," unlocked. Near the auditorium are two others marked simply, "Men" and "Women," which are intended primarily for the public when the auditorium is being used for some function. During the school day cardboard signs saying "Adults Only" are placed on these doors. Girding up my maturity, I used this men's room during my stay at Milgrim. Usually it was empty; but once, as soon as the door clicked behind me, a teacher who had been concealed in the cubicle began jumping up and down to peer over his partition and verify my adulthood.

He was not a voyeur; he was checking on smoking. At most public high schools, students are forbidden to smoke, and this is probably the most common source of friction with authorities. It focuses, naturally, on the washrooms which are the only place students can go where teachers are not supposed to be. Milgrim, for a time, was more liberal than most; last year its administration designated an area behind the school where seniors might smoke during their lunch period. But, as a number of students explained to me during interviews, some of these seniors had "abused the privilege" by lighting up before they got into the area, and the privilege had been withdrawn. No student, however, questioned that smoking was a privilege rather than a right.

THE CONCEPT of privilege is important at Milgrim. Teachers go to the head of the chow line at lunch; whenever I would attempt quietly to stand in line the teacher on hall duty would remonstrate with me. He was right, probably; I was fouling up an entire informal social system by my ostentation. Students on hall patrol also were allowed to come to the head of the line; so were seniors. Much of the behavior that Milgrim depends on to keep it going is motivated by the reward of getting a government-surplus peanut butter or tuna fish sandwich without standing in line.

The lunchroom itself is a major learning experience, which must make quite an impression over four years time. There are two large cafeterias which are used as study halls during the periods before and after the middle of the day. The food, by and large, is good, and more tempting than the menu. The atmosphere is not quite that of a prison, because the students are permitted to talk quietly, under the frowning scrutiny of teachers standing around on duty, during their meal—they are not supposed to talk while standing in line, though this rule is only sporadically enforced. Standing in line takes about a third of their lunch period, and leaves plenty of time for them to eat what is provided them. They may not, in any case, leave the room when they have finished, any more than they could leave a class. Toward the end of the period a steel gate is swung down across the corridor, dividing the wing holding the cafeterias, guidance offices, administrative offices, and auditorium from the rest of the building. Then the first buzzer sounds, and the students sweep out of the cafeteria and press silently forward to the gate. A few minutes later a second buzzer sounds, the gate is opened, and the students file out to their classrooms.

During the meal itself the atmosphere varies in response to chance events and the personality of the teachers assigned supervisory duty; this is especially true in the corridor where the next sitting is waiting in line. The norm is a not unpleasant chatter; but about one teacher in four is an embittered martinet, snarling, whining, continually ordering the students to stand closer to the wall and threatening them with detention or suspension for real or fancied insolence. On other occasions, verbal altercations break out between students in the cafeteria or in line and the *student* hall patrolmen. In one of these that I witnessed, the accused student, a handsome, aggressive-looking young man, defended himself in the informal but explicit language of working-class hostility. This roused the teacher on duty from his former passivity. He walked over toward the boy, and silently but with a glare of contempt, beckoned him from the room with a crooked finger and led him along the corridor to the administrative office: the tall boy rigid in silent protest, the teacher, balding and stoop-shouldered in a wrinkled suit, shambling ahead of him. The youth, I later learned, was suspended for a day. At some lunch periods all this is drowned out by Mantovani-type pop records played over the public address system.

What adults generally, I think, fail to grasp even though they may actually know it, is that there is no refuge or respite from this: no coffee-break, no taking ten for a smoke, no room like the teachers' room, however poor, where the youngsters can get away from adults. High schools don't have club rooms; they have organized gym and recreation. A student cannot go to the library when he wants a book; on certain days his schedule provides a forty-five-minute library period. "Don't let anybody leave early," a guidance counselor urged during a group-testing session at Hartsburgh, an apparently more permissive school that I also visited. "There really isn't any place for them to go." Most of us are as nervous by the age

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of five as we will ever be, and adolescence adds to the strain; but one thing a high-school student learns is that he can expect no provision for his need to give in to his feelings, or swing out in his own style, or creep off and pull himself together.

THE LITTLE things shock most. High-school students—and not just, or even particularly, at Milgrim—have a prisoner's sense of time. They don't know what time it is outside. The research which occasioned my presence at Milgrim, Hartsburgh, and the other schools in my study required me to interview each of twenty-five to thirty students at each school three times. My first appointment with each student was set up by his guidance counselor; I would make the next appointment directly with the student and issue him the passes he needed to keep it. The student has no *open* time at his own disposal; he has to select the period he can miss with least loss to himself. Students well-adapted to the school usually pick study halls; poorer or more troublesome students pick the times of their most disagreeable classes; both avoid cutting classes in which the teacher is likely to respond vindictively to their absence. Most students, when asked when they would like to come for their next interview, replied, "I can come any time." When I pointed out to them that there must, after all, be some times that would be more convenient for them than others, they would say, "Well tomorrow, fourth period" or whatever. But hardly any of them knew when this would be in clock time. High-school classes emphasize the importance of punctuality by beginning at regular but uneven times like 10:43 and 11:27, which are, indeed, hard to remember; and the students did not know when this was.

How typical is all this? The elements of the composition—the passes, the tight scheduling, the reliance on threats of detention or suspension as modes of social control are nearly universal. The usurpation of any possible *area* of student initiative, physical or mental, is about as universal. Milgrim forbids boys to wear trousers that end more than six inches above the floor, and has personnel fully capable of measuring them. But most high schools have some kind of dress regulation; I know of none that accepts and relies on the tastes of students.

There are differences, to be sure, in tone; and these matter. They greatly affect the impact of the place on students. Take, for comparison and contrast, Hartsburgh High. Not fifteen miles from Milgrim, Hartsburgh is an utterly different community. It is larger, more compact, and more suburban; more of a place. Hartsburgh High is much more dominantly middle class and there are few Negroes in the high school there.

First impressions of Hartsburgh High are almost bound to be favorable. The building, like Milgrim, is new; unlike Milgrim's, it is handsome. External walls are mostly glass, which gives a feeling of light, air, and space. At Hartsburgh there is none of the snarling, overt hostility that taints the atmosphere at Milgrim. There are no raucous buzzers; no bells of any kind. Instead, there are little blinker lights arranged like the Mexican flag. The green light blinks and the period is over; the white light signals a warning; when the red light blinks it is time to be in your classroom. Dress regulations exist but are less rigorous than at Milgrim. Every Wednesday, however, is dress-up day; boys are expected to wear ties and jackets or jacket-sweaters, the girls wear dresses rather than skirts and sweaters. The reason is that on Wednesday the school day ends with an extra hour of required assembly and, as the students explain, there are often outside visitors for whom they are expected to look their best.

Students at Hartsburgh seem much more relaxed than at Milgrim. In the grounds outside the main entrance, during lunch period, there is occasional horseplay. For ten minutes during one noon hour I watched three boys enacting a mutual fantasy. One was the audience who only sat and laughed, one the aggressor, and the third—a pleasant, inarticulate varsity basketball player named Paul—was the self-appointed victim. The two protagonists were portraying in pantomime old, silent-movie type fights in slow motion. The boy I did not know would slowly swing at Paul, who would sink twisting to the ground with grimaces of anguish; then the whole sequence would be repeated with variations, though the two boys never switched roles. In my interviews with Paul I had never solved the problems arising from the fact that he was eloquent only with his arms and torso movements, which were lost on the tape recorder, and it was a real pleasure to watch him in his own medium. This was a pleasure Milgrim would never have afforded me. Similarly, in the corridors at Hartsburgh I would occasionally come upon couples holding hands or occasionally rather more, though it distressed me that they always broke guiltily apart as soon as they saw me or any adult. One of my subjects, who was waiting for his interview, was dancing a little jig by himself in the corridor when I got to him. This was all rather reassuring.

It was also contrary to policy. There is a regula-

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tion against couples holding hands and they are punished if caught by the kind of teacher who hates sexuality in the young. The air and space also, subtly, turn out to be illusions if you try to use them. Hartsburgh High is built around a large, landscaped courtyard with little walks and benches. I made the mistake of trying to conduct an interview on one of these benches. When it was over we could not get back into the building except by disturbing a class, for the doors onto this inviting oasis can only be opened from inside, and nobody ever goes there. Since the courtyard is completely enclosed by the high-school building, this arrangement affords no additional protection from intruders; it merely shuts off a possible place for relaxation. The beautiful glass windows do not open enough to permit a body to squirm through and, consequently, do not open enough to ventilate the rooms, in which there are no individual controls for the fiercely effective radiators. Room temperature at Hartsburgh is a matter of high policy.

Teachers do not hide in the washrooms at Hartsburgh; but the principal recently issued a letter warning that any student caught in the vicinity of the school with "tobacco products" would be subject to suspension; students were directed to have their parents sign the letter as written acknowledgment that they were aware of the regulation and return it to school. Staff, of course, are permitted to smoke. At Hartsburgh a former teacher, promoted to assistant principal, serves as a full-time disciplinarian, but students are not dragged to his office by infuriated teachers, as sometimes happens at Milgrim. Instead, during the first period, two students from the school Citizenship Corps go quietly from classroom to classroom with a list, handing out summonses.

Along with having a less rancorous and choleric atmosphere than Milgrim, Hartsburgh seems to have more teachers who like teaching and like kids. But the fundamental pattern is still one of control, distrust, and punishment. The observable differences—and they are striking—are the result almost entirely, I believe, of *structural* and demographic factors and occur despite very similar administrative purposes. Neither principal respects adolescents at all or his staff very much. Both are preoccupied with good public relations as they understand them. Both are inflexible, highly authoritarian men. But their situations are different.

At Milgrim there is a strong district superintendent; imaginative if not particularly humane, he is oriented toward the national educational scene. He likes to have projects, particularly in research and guidance. Guidance officers report through their chairman directly to him, not to the building principal; and the guidance staff is competent, tough, and completely professional. When wrangles occur over the welfare of a student they are likely to be open, with the principal and the guidance director as antagonists; both avoid such encounters if possible, and neither can count on the support of the district office; but when an outside force—like an outraged parent—precipitates a conflict, it is fought out. At Hartsburgh, the district superintendent is primarily interested in running a tight ship with no problems. To this end, he backs the authority of the principal whenever this might be challenged. The guidance office is vestigial and concerned primarily with college placement and public relations in the sense of inducing students to behave in socially acceptable ways with a minimum of fuss.

IN THESE quite different contexts, demographic differences in the student bodies have crucial consequences. At Milgrim, the working-class students are not dominant—they have not got quite enough self-confidence or nearly enough social savvy to be—but they are close enough to it to be a real threat to the nice, college-bound youngsters who set the tone in their elementary and junior high school and who expect to go on dominating the high school. These view the rapid influx of lower-status students as a rising wave that can engulf them, while the newcomers, many of whom are recent migrants or high-school transfers from the city, can remember schools in which they felt more at home.

The result is both to split and to polarize student feeling about the school, its administration, and other students. Nobody likes Milgrim High. But the middle-class students feel that what has ruined it is the lower-class students, and that the punitive constraint with which the school is run is necessary to keep them in line. In some cases these students approach paranoia: one girl—commenting on a mythical high school described in one of our semi-projective research instruments—said, "Well, it says here that the majority of the students are Negro—about a third" (the actual statement is "about a fifth").

The working-class students are hard-pressed; but being hard-pressed they are often fairly realistic about their position. If the Citizenship Corps that functions so smoothly and smugly at Hartsburgh were to be installed at Milgrim, those who actually turned people in and got them in trouble would pretty certainly receive some after-school

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instruction in the way social classes differ in values and in the propensity for non-verbal self-expression. At Milgrim, the working-class kids know where they stand and stand there. They are exceptionally easy to interview because the interviewer need not be compulsively non-directive. Once they sense that they are respected, they respond enthusiastically and with great courtesy. But they do not alter their position to give the interviewer what they think he wants, or become notably anxious at disagreeing with him. They are very concrete in handling experience and are not given to generalization. Most of them seem to have liked their elementary school, and they share the general American respect for education down to the last cliché—but then one will add, as an afterthought, not bothering even to be contemptuous, "Of course, you can't respect *this* school." They deal with their situation there in correspondingly concrete terms. Both schools had student courts last year, for example, and Hartsburgh still does, though few students not in the Citizenship Corps pay much attention to it. Student traffic corpsmen give out tickets for corridor offenses, and these culprits are brought before an elected student judge with an administrative official of the school present as adviser. But Milgrim had a student court last year that quickly became notorious. The "hoody element" got control of it, and since most of the defendants were their buddies, they were either acquitted or discharged on pleas of insanity. The court was disbanded.

The struggle at Milgrim is therefore pretty open, though none of the protagonists see it as a struggle for freedom or could define its issues in terms of principles. The upper-status students merely assent to the way the school is run, much as middle-class white Southerners assent to what the sheriff's office does, while the lower-status students move, or get pushed, from one embroilment to the next without ever quite realizing that what is happening to them is part of a general social pattern. At Hartsburgh the few lower-status students can easily be ignored rather than feared by their middle-class compeers who set the tone. They are not sufficiently numerous or aggressive to threaten the middle-class youngsters or their folkways; but, for the same reason, they do not force the middle-class youngsters to make common cause with the administration. The administration, like forces of law and order generally in the United States, is accepted without deference as a part of the way things are and work. Americans rarely expect authority to be either intelligent or forthright; it looks out for its own interests as best it can. Reformers and troublemakers only make it nervous and therefore worse; the best thing is to take advantage of it when it can help you and at other times to go on living your own life and let it try to stop you.

This is what the Hartsburgh students usually do, and, on the whole, the results are pleasant. The youngsters, being to some degree ivy, do not constantly remind the teachers, as the Milgrim students do, that their jobs have no connection with academic scholarship. Many of the teachers, for their part, act and sound like college instructors, do as competent a job, and enjoy some of the same satisfactions. The whole operation moves smoothly. Both Milgrim and Hartsburgh are valid examples—though of very different aspects—of American democracy in action. And in neither could a student learn as much about civil liberty as a Missouri mule knows at birth.

WHAT is learned in high school, or for that matter anywhere at all, depends far less on what is taught than on what one actually experiences in the place. The quality of instruction in high school varies from sheer rot to imaginative and highly skilled teaching. But classroom content is often handled at a creditable level and is not in itself the source of the major difficulty. Both at Milgrim and Hartsburgh, for example, the students felt that they were receiving competent instruction and that this was an undertaking the school tried seriously to handle. I doubt, however, that this makes up for much of the damage to which high-school students are systematically subjected. What is formally taught is just not that important, compared to the constraint and petty humiliation to which the youngsters with few exceptions must submit in order to survive.

The fact that some of the instruction is excellent and a lot of it pretty good *is* important for another reason; it makes the whole process of compulsory schooling less insulting than it otherwise would be by lending it a superficial validity. Society tells the adolescent that he is sent to school in order to learn what he is taught in the classroom. No anthropologist and very few high school students would accept this as more than a rationalization; but rationalizations, to be at all effective, must be fairly plausible. Just as the draft would be intolerable if the cold war were wholly a piece of power politics or merely an effort to sustain the economy, so compulsory school attendance would be intolerable if what went on in the classrooms were totally inadequate to students' needs and irrelevant to their real intellectual concerns.

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Much of it is, but enough is not, to provide middle-class students, at least, with an answer when their heart cries out "For Christ's sake, what am I doing here?"

But far more of what is deeply and thoroughly learned in the school is designed to keep the heart from raising awkward, heartfelt issues—if design governs in a thing so subtle. It is learned so thoroughly by attendance at schools like Milgrim or even Hartsburgh that most Americans by the time they are adult cannot really imagine that life could be organized in any other way.

First of all, they learn to assume that the state has the right to compel adolescents to spend six or seven hours a day, five days a week, thirty-six or so weeks a year, in a specific place, in charge of a particular group of persons in whose selection they have no voice, performing tasks about which they have no choice, without remuneration and subject to specialized regulations and sanctions that are applicable to no one else in the community nor to them except in this place. Whether this law is a service or a burden to the young—and, indeed, it is both, in varying degrees—is another issue altogether. As I have noted elsewhere,* compulsory school attendance functions as a bill of attainder against a particular age group. The student's position is that of a conscript, who is protected by certain regulations but in no case permitted to use their breach as a cause for terminating his obligation. So the first thing the young learn in school is that there are certain sanctions and restrictions that apply only to them; that they do not participate fully in the freedoms guaranteed by the state, and that *therefore, these freedoms do not really partake of the character of inalienable rights.*

Of course not. The school, as schools continually stress, acts *in loco parentis*; and children may not leave home because their parents are unsatisfactory. What I have pointed out is no more than a special consequence of the fact that students are minors, and minors do not, indeed, share all the rights and privileges—and responsibilities—of citizenship. Very well. However one puts it, we are still discussing the same issue. The high school, then, is where you really learn what it means to be a minor.

For a high school is not a parent. Parents may love their children, hate them, or like most parents, do both in a complex mixture. But they must nevertheless permit a certain intimacy and respond to their children as persons. Homes are not run by regulations, though the parents may think they are, but by a process of continuous and almost entirely unconscious emotional homeostasis, in which each member affects and accommodates to the needs, feelings, fantasy life, and character structure of the others. This may be, and often is, a terribly destructive process; I intend no defense of the family as a social institution. But children grow up in homes or the remnants of homes; are in physical fact dependent on parents, and too intimately related to them to permit their area of freedom to be precisely defined. This is not because they have no rights or are entitled to less respect than adults, but because intimacy conditions freedom and growth in ways too subtle and continuous to be defined as overt acts.

Free societies depend on their members to learn early and thoroughly that public authority is not like that of the family; that it cannot be expected —or trusted—to respond with sensitivity and intimate perception to the needs of individuals but must rely basically, though as humanely as possible, on the impartial application of general formulae. This means that it must be kept functional, specialized, and limited to matters of public policy; the meshes of the law are too coarse to be worn close to the skin. Especially in an open society, where people of very different backgrounds and value systems must function together, it would seem obvious that each must understand that he may not push others further than their common undertaking demands, or impose upon them a manner of life that they feel to be alien.

After the family, the school is the first social institution an individual must deal with—the first place in which he learns to handle himself with strangers. The school establishes the pattern of his subsequent assumptions as to what relations between the individual and society are appropriate and which constitute invasions of privacy and constraints on his spirit—what the British, with exquisite precision, call "taking a liberty." But the American public school evolved as a melting pot, under the assumption that it had not merely the right but the duty to impose a common standard of genteel decency on a polyglot body of immigrants' children and thus insure their assimilation into the better life of the American dream. It accepted, also, the tacit assumption that genteel decency was as far as it could go. If America has generally been governed by the practical man's impatience with other individuals' rights, it has also accepted the practical man's determination to preserve his property by

* See "An Ideology of School Withdrawal," June 1963.

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discouraging public extravagance. With its neglect of personal privacy and individual autonomy the school incorporates a considerable measure of Galbraith's "public squalor." The plant may be expensive—for this is capital goods; but little is provided graciously, liberally, simply as an amenity, either to teachers or students, though administrative offices have begun to assume an executive look.

The first thing the student learns, then, is that as a minor, he is subject to peculiar restraints; the second is that these restraints are general, not limited either by custom or by the schools' presumed commitment to the curriculum. High-school administrators are not professional educators in the sense that a physician, an attorney, or a tax accountant are professionals. They do not, that is, think of themselves as practitioners of a specialized instructional craft, who derive their authority from its requirements. They are specialists in keeping an essentially political enterprise from being strangled by conflicting community attitudes and pressures. They are problem-oriented, and the feelings and needs for growth of their captive and unenfranchised clientele are the least of their problems; for the status of the "teen-ager" in the community is so low that even if he rebels, the school is not blamed for the conditions against which he is rebelling. He is simply a truant or a juvenile delinquent; at worst the school has "failed to reach him." What high-school personnel become specialists in, ultimately, is the *control* of large groups of students even at catastrophic expense to their opportunity to learn. These controls are not exercised primarily to facilitate instruction, and particularly, they are in no way limited to matters bearing on instruction. At several schools in our sample boys had been ordered—sometimes on the complaint of teachers—to shave off beards. One of these boys had played football for the school; he was told that, although the school had no legal authority to require him to shave, he would be barred from the banquet honoring the team unless he complied. Dress regulations are another case in point.

Of course these are petty restrictions, enforced by petty penalties. American high schools are not concentration camps. But I am not complaining about their severity; what disturbs me is what they teach their students concerning the proper relationship of the individual to society, and in this respect the fact that the restrictions and penalties are unimportant in themselves makes matters worse. Gross invasions are more easily recognized for what they are; petty restrictions are only resisted by "troublemakers." What matters in the end is that the school does not take its own business of education seriously enough to mind it.

THE EFFECTS on the students are manifold. The concepts of dignity and privacy, notably deficient in American adult folkways, are not permitted to develop here. The school's assumption of custodial control of students implies that power and authority are indistinguishable. If the school's authority is not limited to matters pertaining to education, it cannot be derived from its educational responsibilities. It is a naked, empirical fact, to be accepted or contraverted according to the possibilities of the moment. In such a world, power counts more than legitimacy; if you don't have power, it is naïve to think you have rights that must be respected . . . wise up. High school students experience regulation only as control, not as protection; they know, for example, that the principal will generally uphold the teacher in any conflict with a student, regardless of the merits of the case. Translated into the high-school idiom, *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re* becomes "If you get caught, it's just your ass."

Students do not often resent this; that is the tragedy. All weakness tends to corrupt, and impotence corrupts absolutely. Identifying, as the weak must, with the more powerful and frustrating of the forces that impinge upon them, they accept the school as the way life is and close their minds against the anxiety of perceiving alternatives. Many students like high school; others loathe and fear it. But even the latter do not object to it on principle; the school effectively obstructs their learning of the principles on which objection might be based; though these are among the principles that, we boast, distinguish us from totalitarian societies.

Yet, finally, the consequence of continuing through adolescence to submit to diffuse authority that is not derived from the task at hand—as a doctor's orders or the training regulations of an athletic coach, for example, usually are—is more serious than political incompetence or weakness of character. There is a general arrest of development. An essential part of growing up is learning that, though differences of power among men lead to brutal consequences, all men are peers; none is omnipotent, none derives his potency from magic, but only from his specific competence and function. The policeman represents the majesty of the state, but this does not mean that he can put you in jail; it means, precisely, that he cannot—at least not for long. Any person or agency re-

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sponsible for handling throngs of young people—especially if he does not like them or is afraid of them—is tempted to claim diffuse authority and snare the youngster in the trailing remnants of childhood emotion which always remain to trip him. Schools succumb to this temptation, and control pupils by reinvoking the sensations of childhood punishment, which remain effective because they were originally selected, with great unconscious guile, to dramatize the child's weakness in the face of authority. "If you act like a bunch of spoiled brats, we'll treat you like a bunch of spoiled brats," is a favorite dictum of sergeants, and school personnel, when their charges begin to show an awkward capacity for independence.

Thus the high school is permitted to infantilize adolescence; in fact, it is encouraged to by the widespread hostility to "teen-agers" and the anxiety about their conduct found throughout our society. It does not allow much maturation to occur during the years when most maturation would naturally occur. Maturity, to be sure, is not conspicuously characteristic of American adult life, and would almost certainly be a threat to the economy. So perhaps in this, as in much else, the high school is simply the faithful servant of the community.

There are two important ways in which it can render such service. The first of these is through its impact on individuals: on their values, their conception of their personal worth, their patterns of anxiety, and on their mastery and ease in the world—which determine so much of what they think of as their fate. The second function of the school is Darwinian; its biases, though their impact is always on individual youngsters, operate systematically to mold entire social groups. These biases endorse and support the values and patterns of behavior of certain segments of the population, providing their members with the credentials and shibboleths needed for the next stages of their journey, while they instill in others a sense of inferiority and warn the rest of society against them as troublesome and untrustworthy. In this way the school contributes simultaneously to social mobility and to social stratification. It helps see to it that the kind of people who get ahead are the kind who will support the social system it represents, while those who might, through intent or merely by their being, subvert it, are left behind as a salutary moral lesson.

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ROBERT HELLMAN

DEATH IN AMERICA—A Story

DEATH HAS been in my family for generations. My mother—she is eighty-six years old now with a cataract on one eye and she has made friends with the Salvation Army, they have an academy right across the street from her apartment in the West Bronx—my mother knows all about it, all the stories how death came in Russia to my grandfathers and my great-uncles and my great-grandfathers and my great-greats. She told me most of them when I was a little boy and she was nursing me through a mysterious childhood disease—she calls it a gripped gut—and I can remember those stories going down with the spoonfuls of cream of wheat she fed me.

To the men he comes. The women in the family die, so to speak, without death. I suppose I can say that I've seen him come with my own eyes, once to my Uncle Morton the house-painter and once to my father. He came once to me also, the time the gut got so gripped that I went into a convulsion and was unconscious for thirty-six hours. That was also the time they put me in a mustard bath, but the water was too hot and they burned my feet. I can't remember him coming to me, of course. All I can remember is how nice and smooth the new skin was when my feet healed.

Now that I am fifty-three with unusual symptoms of middle-age and recurring childhood diseases, I suppose he will be coming again very soon. Whenever my mother tells me, "Morris, don't work so hard," or "Morris, don't drink so much," or "Morris, why don't you visit your father's grave sometimes, I bet you never even say *Kaddish* any more," or when I visit her in the West Bronx and I stand by the window where my father used to sit and look out over the geraniums at the Salvation Army practicing drill and confession on their campus, I know death is on his way. I am not afraid of him. But he makes me nervous, ashamed—like a greenhorn relative who doesn't know how to behave in the world. What is he doing in America, anyway?

In Russia they knew how to handle him. When he came to my Uncle Yossel, the *letz,* in Odessa, he told them, "Put him on the chamber-pot and tell him to ease himself. He is constipated, it will take him a long time." And Grandpa Broom —that is what I called him when I was a child but his real name was Avrom—Grandpa Broom said, "When he comes in, take some fresh hay from the barn and put it on the pillow so we both can smell it." It was Grandpa Broom's grandfather—even my mother can't remember his name —who lived to be a hundred-and-six and who chopped wood at a hundred-and-four. But he lost his sense of smell and he drank off a whole pot of warm chicken fat under the impression that it was licorice water. "My God!" his wife said, "what have you done?" He took to his bed, and when death came he farted so loud that the little muzhik who came to light the Friday evening candles got scared and ran out of the house.

In America it is different, it gets mixed up. When death came to my Uncle Morton, for example, there was something wrong with the furniture. Five years before, after my Aunt Becky died, my cousin Edie threw out all the Grand Rapids and bought modern. Only for some reason she kept all the antimacassars. I saw them for the first and last time—she may still have them, I haven't been there since—the day my uncle died. There was a whole row of them tacked to the straight high cushions of the modern couch that must have been at least fifteen feet long, and there was even one on the little pillow that hung on straps on the Knoll chair. The chair was brand new. My father turned it upside down to see how it held together. "It looks like a skeleton," he said. And in cousin Edie's bedroom, on the bed without a headboard, was still the long French doll that my Aunt Becky bought in Philadelphia at the sesquicentennial.

My Uncle Morton lay on a mattress on the living-room floor. He took time out from his groaning to agree with my father. "If it lasts another two years," he said, "it will be a miracle."

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Cousin Edie took us out to the kitchen for coffee and cake. "He's got himself a new kind of groan," she told us. We listened. It went eh-eh-aha, eh-eh-aha, and sometimes eh-eh-ah-aha, eh-eh-ah-aha. We all nodded our heads and smiled sadly. "What happened to Bernard?" my mother said to Cousin Edie. "Bernard?" Cousin Edie said. "I still see him. We have our own affairs, we each have our own affairs. I'm afraid you wouldn't dance at the wedding." Cousin Edie bent over to cut more cake, and my mother made a face at my father.

"Roise," Uncle Morton called, "Roise." My mother went in to him. "Roise," he said, "why doesn't he come? When will there be an end? In all my life I never hurt anybody. Why should I suffer so much?" "Have patience," my mother said, "have a little patience, Motke." We were quiet, listening to them. My father's eyes filled up and got red. Cousin Edie began to cry and rock herself back and forth in her chair. "You remember, Roise," Uncle Morton said, "the hurricane? That hurricane killed my Becky. If it wasn't for that hurricane my Becky would still be here." "Don't be foolish, Motke," my mother said, "she had a stroke. It had nothing to do with the hurricane." "Yes, yes!" my Uncle Morton said bitterly. He spoke always strong in his nose, and now his voice rang like a trombone. "Yes!" he said, "that's what they all say. But I *know,* Roise"—his voice went up to a fanfare—"it was that hurricane! In thirty years, in all the time we were living in America, we didn't have a hurricane! Why did we need one all of a sudden!" "Shah! Shah! Motke!" my mother said. He subsided again.

We came and stood by the living-room door watching him. I thought to myself that this was worse than a hurricane. Where was everybody? The son, Julie, who has a boy and a girl, lives in Milwaukee—he didn't even come to the funeral. Cousin Edie, the old maid with the affairs, all she had to do was walk into the room and Uncle Morton groaned louder. "Papa," she said, "do you want me to call the doctor?" "Call, don't call," Uncle Morton said, "what's the difference? He's coming anyhow." "No," Cousin Edie said, "the doctor isn't coming today, I'll have to call him." "Not the doctor," Uncle Morton said. She put on her coat and her gloves. "Feel the gloves," she said. "You feel how cold they are? They're Mama's gloves, it's funny they're so cold. She couldn't wear them, they were so cold."

While she was away we sat and watched him. He lay very still, propped on his side with three pillows. If he moved or he coughed, the pains would grab him and he would stop the little groans and gasp for breath. My father sat behind him on the sofa, weeping and blowing his nose quietly. My mother sat on the edge of her chair leaning over Uncle Morton's head but not touching him. "Do you want something, Motke?" she said. He groaned a little louder but less brokenly, like a child. "What is it, Motke dear? What do you want?" It was funny—when I looked at him propped up with the three pillows, it made me think of the Passover seder. Motke was older than my father, so it was he who used to lean back on the pillows at the head of the table.

At the seder, too, we waited for someone—Elijah, the messenger. When I was a boy I got him mixed up with my first Hebrew teacher, a little old man with a snuff-stained beard and a cigarette holder, with a cigarette case full of butts that maybe he picked up off the streets. There was a messenger for you. I hated to sit next to him at the dining-room table where we had our lessons, because he smelled so bad of stale tobacco and stale clothes. And I was always afraid that someone would come in and see me with him. When someone did come, I was so ashamed I wanted to get under the table. He taught me the four questions for the seder, but that wasn't enough for him, he had to Americanize it, bring it up to date, so he taught me also a little speech in Yiddish about how if my father couldn't answer the questions he would have to give me a gold watch with a gold chain. I don't know why, but that speech used to make me so ashamed I could have died. When my father heard me reciting it one day, he fired the poor old man. He cried a little when my father told him not to come back, and I thought it was my fault that the poor old man wouldn't have anything to eat. But if such a messenger turned up at my deathbed, I would fire him too.

Better, a thousand times better, the Salvation Army, with the drums and the cornets, healthy young people with red cheeks and clean uniforms. When my mother had her first cataract removed, two of them visited her in the hospital, two nice, clean girls from the Academy. It was a Catholic hospital, and they gave all the old Italian ladies with the bandages on their eyes pamphlets to read. I myself don't know what to say in a hospital, but they drew me out, they drew everybody out—quietly, you understand, nicely. The old ladies loved it. "We're so glad to meet you, Mr. Glazer," they said to me. "Your mother's our best helper in the neighborhood. We're all praying for her to get well real soon." A real breath of Iowa.

"What do you do to help them?" I asked my mother when the girls left. She was still lying flat

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on her back with orders not to move, so she couldn't shrug her shoulders. "Nothing," she said "nothing. What should I do? I give them old clothes. I had still two suits from your father, he should rest in peace, and the old raincoat you left once in the house." "That's all?" "That's all. What else? Only sometimes I go with them visiting." "Visiting?" "It's nothing—to old people, to sick people. They're very nice, Morris, they don't care if you're Jewish or Catholic or what. Of course, they talk a lot about"—she lowered her voice to a whisper so the Italian ladies shouldn't hear—"about Jesus Christ." "A fine thing!" I said. "So?" she said with a little smile, "He was also a Jew." "And what do you do for the sick people, Mama?" "We cheer them up. Sometimes, if they're not too sick, the girls sing a little to them, church music." "So you're turning into a real *Salvationik,* Mama?" "Never mind, Morris, never mind. Isn't it better people should have somebody, anybody, than they should die alone like dogs?" I was surprised, I was only teasing her, I didn't expect her to take it so seriously. "You remember how your father died, Morris?" "All right, Mama, all right, I was only fooling. Don't talk about it, you'll cry. And anyhow, Papa didn't die all alone." "Just as good," she said. "I left him for five minutes with that dope Pincus and he died." "I was there," I said "You only had time to put your nose in," my mother said.

It was true. I came into the room, it was a six-patient room in the public ward, just as my father died. I'd been there once before to visit—he wasn't sick long. He too was lying on pillows, they kept him high in the bed on account of the fluid in his chest. There was a big tank of oxygen by the bed, and while I talked to him he breathed in the oxygen mask. It happened at that time that I had troubles, financial troubles. I didn't want to talk about them to him, but I did. He listened for a while and then he took off the oxygen mask. "Morris, my boy," he said, "don't worry so much. Just thank God we don't have to pay for this." He looked around the room. I looked too. For a hospital it was a pretty dirty room, with big yellow stains on the wall where there must have been a leaky pipe and with worn-out, dirty linoleum on the floor. Three of the patients were covered up, asleep—my father told me they never moved. Of the two who were awake, one looked like an old bum with red eyes and scabby lips, and the other, a Negro man, half paralyzed, begged money from the visitors. I thought to myself that somewhere I would have to find the money to move my father to a private room.

"It's not so bad here," my father said. "Only the day nurse is lazy, a dope. Yesterday I asked him for boiled water, and he brought me hot water from the faucet. Only I don't have patience to lay here so long." "Don't worry," I said, "it won't be so long. You won't be here even a month. No," I said, making up my mind, "not even a week." My father looked at me. I saw right away how he took it, but I didn't know what to say.

Two days later he died. Pincus, his lodge brother, was sitting with him. Pincus was talking politics in a loud voice just as if he was standing on Seventh Avenue, and my father was breathing in the oxygen mask. Just as I came in, my father dropped the mask. He opened his eyes wide and looked so hard in my direction that I turned around in the doorway. When I looked back again my father was blowing up, his cheeks, his belly, like a balloon. Pincus yelled something and the doctor came running in and bent over my father and massaged his stomach, but he was dead. The air went out of him and he died.

I hope to God I die in my own house. Not that I expect to go like Grandpa Broom, with a long white beard spread out on my chest and my hand on my grandson's head. I'm no talmudist, no learned man, the goyim won't cry outside my door. At least, thank God, I won't have any Edie to worry about—both my girls are married. I even have three grandchildren right here in the city, but my daughters won't bring them. As for death—death came to Grandpa Broom. What else? Should he have gone to death? But here, who can bear to look at him? If the prophet came to one of our English-speaking seders and drank the extra glass of wine, could I look at him?

I AM NOW almost the same age my Uncle Morton was, and I am a widower, also like him. But my mother will probably be dead by then, and I don't have any sister-in-law to lean over me, "What Motke, what do you want, Motkele?" How carefully she leaned down and passed her hand over his bald head without touching him. "What, Motke darling, what?" Until all of a sudden he raised his head and looked across at the Knoll chair. "Roise," he said, "there he comes—Don't let him sit on that piece of junk." We all turned and looked. When we turned back, Uncle Morton was dead. My mother touched him finally and wept out loud. My father took away the three pillows. While we laid Uncle Morton out, my father kept mumbling to himself. "What, Papa," I said at last, "what did you say?" "He didn't even have a place to sit down," my father said.

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THE IMPOTENCE OF AMERICAN POWER

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

THE UNITED STATES has at its disposal the greatest concentration of material power existing in the world today; in view of its productive capacity and military strength, it is the most powerful nation on earth. Yet the government of that most powerful nation is incapable of making the actions of even the weakest of foreign governments conform to its desires. It is incapable of doing so even with regard to those governments which owe their very existence to American support and which could not survive for twenty-four hours were that support withdrawn.

South Vietnam, South Korea, and Taiwan are cases in point. None of these governments could exist without the economic and military support of the United States and without the American commitment to go to war in their defense. Yet we have told the government of South Vietnam that it ought to change its policies and composition, and it has changed neither. We have told the government of South Korea that it ought to respect at least a minimum of democratic rights, and we have been rebuffed for our "intervention." We have told the government of Taiwan that it ought not to station some of its best troops on the offshore islands, and these troops are still stationed there.

Within the traditional sphere of influence of the United States, Cuba has been transformed into a military base at the service of a hostile power and into the headquarters for the subversion of the Western hemisphere, and we have been unable to put a stop to it. The democratic governments of the Dominican Republic and of Honduras were overthrown in spite of American support, and we are unable to forestall the threat to our interests implicit in the polarization of the politics of these nations between the military and the revolutionaries.

The history of our foreign-aid policy is a testimony to our inability to achieve our political purposes even with an abundance of material means. So is our economic policy *vis-à-vis* the Communist bloc; our attempts to wage the cold war by economic means have been frustrated by the eagerness of our most prosperous allies to make economic gains at the risk of strengthening the common enemy. The Atlantic Alliance, the cornerstone of our foreign and military policies, is crumbling, and we stand watching the process of decay without being able to arrest it. Pakistan is our ally and has received billions in American aid, but we have been unable to dissuade her from making common cause with Communist China against India, a country we support. We tried to transform the army of a neutralist Laos into an instrument of American policy, and Laotian Communism is today stronger and more threatening than it was then.

We are here in the presence not of isolated failures, which any foreign policy must take in its stride, but of a pattern of impotence which points to organic disabilities in our foreign policy. That so powerful a nation as the United States is so consistently unable to achieve what it sets out to achieve cannot be due to accidents or personal insufficiencies alone. The cause must be sought in certain impediments to the effective exercise of American power which seem to paralyze even the best makers of policy. Three types of such impediments can be distinguished: the objective conditions under which contemporary foreign policy must be carried on; the moral and intellectual assumptions underlying the American approach to foreign policy; and a major tenet of American foreign policy. No one of these factors can explain the impotence of our power, but together they may well do so.

Two objective conditions of contemporary world politics limit our power, as they do the power of all major nations: the availability of nuclear weapons, and the moral stigma that attaches to colonialism and to the policies traditionally associated with it.

The availability of nuclear weapons limits the freedom of action of the nuclear powers even more than it does that of the non-nuclear ones. The latter may reason that they can afford to threaten another nation with conventional force or actually use force against it; for the risk that one of the nuclear powers will intervene with nuclear weapons on one or the other side is likely to be remote. Nuclear powers are in this respect in a much more precarious situation. If they face each other with the threat or the actual-

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ity of conventional force, escalation into nuclear violence is an ever-present possibility, whose realization depends upon accidents, miscalculations, and, above all, the importance of the stakes. The situation is only somewhat, and not necessarily much, less precarious if a nuclear power threatens force against a non-nuclear one to whose defense another nuclear power is committed.

Since nuclear war, in contrast to conventional force, is recognized by all concerned not as a rational instrument of national policy, but as a suicidal absurdity, nuclear powers are extremely reluctant to use any kind of force in support of their respective national interests. Yet in a world of sovereign nations it is impossible to support national interests effectively without the ultimate resort to military force. Thus the impotence of American policy toward Cuba is matched by the impotence of Soviet policy with regard to Berlin.

THE EXAMPLE of our policy toward Cuba also points to the other objective condition limiting the use of our power. Twenty years ago, it would still have been a simple matter to remove through the use of force the threat Castro's Cuba constitutes to our interests. The marines did it before, and they could have done it again. Leaving the problem of nuclear war aside, it would not be impossible to do the same thing even today, but it would not be a simple matter, and for two connected reasons. This is the age of the emancipation of the weak nations from the control of the strong ones. It is not only former colonies that have been emancipated; legally sovereign but actually dependent nations have been emancipated as well. In dealing with these latter, the strong nations can no longer use their power at will without incurring moral reprobation and risking in consequence a loss of prestige and influence. A great power may take these risks if the interests at stake appear to be important enough. This is what the Soviet Union did when it sent its army against the Hungarian revolution of 1956, and while the moral reprobation the Russians earned for this move is but an ineffectual memory, the political and military gains have proven to be lasting.

However, the change in the moral climate has also affected the military issue itself. Twenty years ago, the government of Cuba presided over a by-and-large inert mass of people; it was an old-style dictatorship, and the military problem consisted in the main in removing it and replacing it by one favorable to the interests of the United States. Today, just as the weak nations have been emancipated from control by the strong ones, so have the populations of the weak nations been emancipated in differing degrees from passive submission to their respective governments. Some of these peoples have become active participants in the process of emancipation, and they now have governments that govern in their name and with their support. Thus, a strong nation intervening with military force may not accomplish its task by removing the government or even conquering the country. It may also have to subdue the population at large, which may take up arms against it. While these possibilities do not rule out the use of force, they make a powerful nation think twice before resorting to it.

The United States has gone further in abstaining from the use of its power than is justified by a correct assessment of these two objective factors. It has been paralyzed in the use of its power, military and other, by two moral principles which it has persuaded itself have governed its foreign policy in the past and must govern it in the future: equality and non-intervention. In its relations with its allies, the United States has been caught in a dilemma between its responsibilities as the most powerful member of an alliance and the principle of the equality of men and nations, which has guided its judgment, if not its actions, since the beginning of its history. The consistent application of superior American power would have reduced the allies to satellites and would thereby have defeated the very purpose for which these nations had become the allies of America. On the other hand, the successful conduct of an alliance on the basis of the equality of its members presupposes that the identity of interests among the allies and their awareness of this identity are so complete that they will pursue common interests with common measures through spontaneous cooperation. In the degree that reality falls short of this assumption, the alliance cannot operate.

Of these two alternatives, the United States has chosen consistently the latter. The United States has refused to bring its superior power to bear upon its alliances on behalf of common interests that were naturally inchoate and were competing with divergent ones. The result has been disintegration and anarchy—as with NATO—or else the exploitation of American resources by a weak but determined ally. Governments that govern only because the United States maintains them, such as those of Taiwan and South Vietnam, and governments that have no alternative to the American association, such as those of Pakistan and Spain, have been able to play a winning game in which the United States holds all the trumps.

The most potent of these trumps is intervention, either through the withholding of benefits or the inflicting of disadvantages. It is this trump which we have consistently refused to play on moral grounds. Yet regardless of one's moral evaluation of intervention, it is obvious that we are intervening massively and effectively all over the world and that what we have foresworn is not intervention per se but only certain kinds of intervention. This position is morally untenable and, as will be shown, politically self-defeating.

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To cite the example of South Vietnam, which is but more flagrant and presently more acute than many others, we intervened by putting President Diem into power and supplying him with the implements of power. He owes his authority and power to our continuous political, military, and economic intervention. We intervened by establishing and keeping him in power because we thought that such intervention was in our and his country's interests. If this kind of intervention is morally justified, where is it written that it is morally indefensible to intervene in order to compel President Diem to pursue the policies for the sake of which we installed and kept him in power, or to remove him from power when he has proved himself incapable of pursuing those policies? The Western tradition of political philosophy justifies revolution against a tyrannical government, and even tyrannicide. Intervention in support of such morally justified undertakings is by the same token morally justified.

The issue here is not really moral but intellectual, and the moral issue is raised only as justification and rationalization of an attitude which shrinks from certain kinds of intervention, not only in the domestic affairs of other nations but in the political status quo as such.

We are at home with political actions which are but a repetition of past action and the results of which are likely to stabilize things as they are. Yet we dread unprecedented political action because we dread the uncertainties, the risks, and the unknown results that such action is likely to conjure up. Thus we prefer safe routines in support of the status quo to innovations which will disturb it. It is only when we are face to face with a clear and present military threat that we act with bold and innovating zeal. But when we are faced with a political crisis, actual or impending, we are incapable of that foresight, sureness of touch as regards means and ends, and manipulative skill, which are the prerequisites of successful political action. We tend to make the political problem manageable again by redefining it in military terms; thus we can act once more with unambiguous simplicity and without regard for those complexities, uncertainties, and risks inherent in the political act. And as concerns the political problem, we wait for something to happen, for de Gaulle to disappear from the political scene, for the Diem regime to straighten itself out, for something to turn up in China. However, short of death and natural catastrophes, nothing can happen but the actions of others filling the void which our paralysis has left.

Hence the crisis of the Atlantic Alliance, proclaimed but by no means created by de Gaulle in January 1963, took Washington by surprise. Our government reacted with indignation but not with reflection and political action. Yet the Suez crisis of the fall of 1956 ought to have opened its eyes to the inevitable decline of our alliances due to radically altered objective conditions. Pointing to the forms which this decline was likely to take, I wrote in 1957: "While these considerations are admittedly speculative from the vantage point of 1957, they may well reflect the actuality of 1960." However, faced with the actuality of 1963, our government has been able to think of only one remedy: the multilateral nuclear force, a military device of most dubious value.

A similar pattern of passivity is revealed by our reaction to the crisis in South Vietnam. Knowing that we cannot win the war with Diem but unwilling to replace him, we argue with a patent lack of consistency that since there is no alternative to Diem let us go on with the war. Yet the argument is in the nature of a self-fulfilling prophecy: there is no alternative to Diem because our support of Diem prevents prospective alternative leaders from emerging. Such leaders cannot present themselves to public inspection since they have been exiled, imprisoned, or are under constant close surveillance by the secret police. They can emerge only after Diem is gone.

FINALLY, our impotence is aggravated and rendered irreparable by our commitment to anti-Communism as the overriding objective of our foreign policy. For most of our allies, anti-Communism is at best incidental to concrete national objectives and at worst irrelevant to them, being a mere device to secure and keep American support. Thus the governments of Taiwan and South Vietnam are not so much anti-Communist on principle as competitors for power with governments which happen to be Communist. Pakistan has allied herself with us in order to be able to fight, not Communism, but India, and she turned to China as soon as we gave military support to India against the latter.

While the anti-Communism of these and other of our allies is a matter of expediency rather than principle, it is our commitment to an indiscriminate anti-Communism, neglectful of concrete national interests, which enables our allies to deprive us of our freedom of choice. They can counter every move of ours that displeases them with an argument supplied by us: "If you do that, we shall go Communist." And so we stand helplessly by while they have their way.

Our impotence in the fullness of our power is, then, in some measure the result of objective conditions over which we have no control and which restrict the power of other powerful nations as well. In good measure, however, the source of that impotence is in ourselves. We are paralyzed because our moral, intellectual, and political judgment has gone astray. Our judgment must be reformed before we can expect to recover the use of our power, and upon that recovery the improvement of our foreign policies must wait.

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THE "JEWISH CHRONICLE" & OTHERS

John Gross

A WELL-ORGANIZED exhibition devoted to the Anglo-Jewish press has just closed in London. In some ways it was a melancholy affair: dead newspapers lay in their display cases thick as autumnal leaves. But the show was built around a success story: that of the weekly *Jewish Chronicle,* which for most people *is* the Anglo-Jewish press. Founded as far back as 1841, the *Chronicle* has been the longest-lived Jewish periodical in the world since the French *Archives Israélites* closed down shortly before the war. Its current circulation is over 65,000; at a guess it reaches half the 400,000 Jews in Britain, and a fair number abroad.

Intellectually the *Chronicle*'s heyday was at the turn of the century, when it numbered among its regular contributors Solomon Schechter, Israel Zangwill, Herbert Loewe, the historians Israel Abrahams and Lucien Wolf, the folklorist Joseph Jacobs, and others of the same caliber. The Golden Jubilee number carried a fifty-year retrospect by Graetz, probably the last piece he wrote. If comparable contributors are lacking today, it is not through oversight, but because they are scarcely to be found —in England, at any rate. The *Chronicle* is the mirror of the community, as anyone leafing through Cecil Roth's centenary history will quickly realize. Hence today its property supplements are considerably fatter than its literary ones. But editorially it tries to keep its standards high, and in one important respect there has been no falling off. The late-Victorian *Chronicle* established an outstanding tradition of foreign reporting, including such things as the famous monthly supplement "Darkest Russia" and exceptionally thorough accounts of the Dreyfus Affair. This was during the epoch, inaugurated earlier in the century by Moses Montefiore, when the English community aspired to some kind of moral leadership among Jews throughout the world. That period now belongs to history, but the *Chronicle*'s international coverage is still equally good. The current issue, opened at random, carries stories on the latest activities of the nationalist and anti-Semitic Tacuara in Buenos Aires, the Czech refusal to rehabilitate Mordecai Oren, the publication of a new Russian-Hebrew dictionary, this week's Israeli political crisis, an attack by the former West German Finance Minister on payment of reparations to Israel—the kind of item treated skimpily if at all by the general British press.

Most readers of the *Jewish Chronicle* buy it in the first place for its domestic news, however—and in this context, domestic means domestic. Poring over the births, marriages, and deaths (particularly the deaths) has become an established Friday night ritual. Great stretches of space, too, are taken up with communal politics—every time I look at the paper, after however long an interval, the same wrangles seem to be going on and the same officials handing in their resignations. There is also a tendency which sometimes verges on the morbid: to dredge up items of Jewish interest from unlikely sources. I recall one review, a few years back, of a revival of Wycherley's bawdy Restoration comedy *The Country Wife,* which began by speculating whether or not Manasseh ben Israel could have seen the original production.

But if all this smacks of the parish pump, at least it proves that the parish still exists. Indeed, although the *Jewish Chronicle* owes a good deal to a succession of gifted editors, it continues to flourish primarily because there is a demand for it: the Anglo-Jewish community is still homogeneous enough to require highly centralized if flexible institutions, among them a paper with an undogmatic *Klal Yisrael* policy. The Jewish newspaper which can please everybody hasn't been invented, but the *Chronicle* has generally shown a sure instinct for the prevailing mood of its readers. Certainly it could never have kept its position if it had opposed Zionism; but the most notable of its editors in this century, the fiery Leopold J. Greenberg, led it firmly into the Zionist camp as far back as 1907 (through he continued to give the anti-Zionists a hearing). This was at a time when most communal leaders were either indifferent or actively hostile to Herzl's ideas, but Greenberg looked to the future. In the years before the First World War his tireless advocacy of Zionism conferred respectability on the movement in many English eyes, and undoubtedly played a major part in creating the climate which made the Balfour Declaration possible.

The *Chronicle* wasn't the first in the field—there was a *Hebrew Intelligencer* as early as the 1820's —but its very success has drained much of the life away from the rest of the English-language Jewish press. It swallowed up its only serious rival, the *World,* long ago; for the rest there have been a mass

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of small, scholarly, Zionist, and local magazines. A few curiosities have bobbed up, such as *Jewish Society,* a *Tatler*-like compilation of smart society chatter brought out by a lady novelist in the 90's. The casualty list has been high: one factor is the steady departure abroad of journalists and sometimes even journals, most notably the *Jewish Quarterly Review,* which moved from London to Philadelphia in 1910. Hebrew-speaking journalists were particularly prone to think of themselves as transients, although eight or nine Hebrew journals had appeared sporadically in mid-Victorian London. Ahad-ha'am had next to no contact with English Jews during his fifteen-odd years in London as representative of a Russian tea firm; Joseph Chaim Brenner lived for a time in Whitechapel in near isolation, setting up and printing his own work, before he left for Palestine. One Hebrew weekly, produced under impossible conditions in a small flat in the East End, did manage to struggle on for the better part of twenty years—*HaYehoody* (or so the title was charmingly transliterated in the copy on display at the recent London exhibition, which dated from a time when the British Raj still lorded it over the Hindoo).

THE BIG surprise of the exhibition was the Yiddish section. The period of the great influx of Jews to England from Eastern Europe has still not been properly explored; most British Jews seems incurious about their immediate past, and it is characteristic that the only adequate study of the period, Lloyd P. Gartner's invaluable survey, *The Jewish Immigrant in England 1870–1914,* should come from America. Even Gartner admits that the Yiddish press is an uncharted field, although it is now being studied by another American, Leonard Prager. Meanwhile it was an eye-opener for visitors to the exhibition to learn that Britain has had as many as one-hundred-sixty Yiddish journals, the first of them dating from 1867, well before large-scale immigration was under way.

Caught halfway between America and Eastern Europe, Yiddish culture in England was short-lived. Numbers were comparatively small, and the pressure to anglicize was fierce. Consequently, what looked like positively exotic items in London would scarcely seem novelties in New York. But there is something peculiarly poignant about these plants which never quite managed to take root in the unpropitious soil. One doesn't have to go much further than the titles of the papers on display or listed in the catalogue for vivid reminders of the East End of slums and sweated labor to which the first immigrants had to adjust: *Der Poylisher Yidel, Heypni* (i.e. halfpenny) *Speshel Telegraf, Brill's Telefon,* the Yiddish supplement to the *Anti-Sweater, Der Londoner Yud,* with its stunted little drawings of peddlers and tailors, like woodcuts on a Victorian broadsheet. The old country still looms up in the Bundist sheets, *Pogromin-Blatt* and "Latest News from Despotic Russia." But equally forlorn in their way, from this side of the European holocaust, are the humorous magazines: *Der Bluffer, Der Ligner, Freyliche Shtunden, Pipifox* (or "Illustrated Jewish Bits").

Remotest of all, however, was the corner given over to the socialist and anarchist press. London, in other respects on the periphery of the Yiddish world, here alone had some claim to be considered an important center. Most of the leading socialist writers eventually went to America, and the movement rapidly dwindled away, to be replaced largely by trade unionism. For a time, though, its work set a pattern for Jewish socialist groups elsewhere, and it knew a brief moment of glory: the birthday celebrations of the socialist-cum-anarchist club in Berner Street, a narrow turning off the Commercial Road, were attended by Kropotkin and William Morris. (Morris was unique among prominent English socialists in taking a warm personal interest in the East End immigrant movement; Jewish socialism might have made more of a mark in London if the Fabians hadn't remained detached, or if H. M. Hyndman, leader of the English Marxists, hadn't been an avowed anti-Semite.)

The anarchists had a longer run. They took over the leading socialist paper, the *Arbeiter Freint,* and founded some journals of their own, such as *Zherminal.* The leading anarchist journalist in the East End was a remarkable personality, Rudolph Rocker, a non-Jew from Germany who taught himself Yiddish and made his home in London. Active in England as far back as the 1890's, he died only five years ago, leaving behind a fascinating autobiography, *The London Years.* Rocker was a citizen of the world, a highly educated man who deplored terrorism; but to the English public at large, anarchism increasingly came to suggest conspiratorial violence, particularly after the notorious Sidney Street siege in 1911 (a gunfight between an East End gang, wrongly assumed to be anarchists, and troops who were led on the spot by Winston Churchill, Home Secretary at the time). The movement was largely crushed by the First World War, though it trickled on into the recent past. It was, of course, bitterly anti-bourgeois and anti-religious; some of the smartly dressed visitors to the West End gallery where last month's exhibition was held, who stood peering indulgently at faded copies of journals open at articles commemorating the extremist German leader Johann Most, would probably have run a mile if an authentic 1900 anarchist had come into the room.

The Yiddish journalists who stared hopefully or sternly or quizzically out of the old sepia photographs pinned up in the exhibition hall have left virtually no successors. The last Yiddish daily closed down in 1950, and now there is only a solitary weekly. The

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group of Yiddish littérateurs who used to gather every afternoon in Lyons's teashop in Whitechapel have scattered, too, although one of them, the poet A. N. Stencl, still runs a periodical, *Loshn un Lebn,* which he can be seen hawking outside Jewish meeting all over London. Apart from occasional concerts and charity shows, the Grand Palais, the last of London's Yiddish theaters, is now used exclusively for bingo. The language has not yet entirely died out, but ten years from now it is unlikely to survive outside of a few pockets of extreme Orthodoxy. Meanwhile the future lies wholly with English. This means that, although specialist groups are bound to go on setting up their own magazines (a significant newcomer is the *Jewish Journal of Sociology*), the *Jewish Chronicle* has assumed more importance than ever as a cohesive force in the community.

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HUNGER & IDEOLOGY

Steven Marcus

> Famine seems to be the last, the most dreadful resource of nature. . . . The vices of mankind are active and able ministers of depopulation. They are the precursors in the great army of destruction; and often finish the dreadful work themselves. But should they fail in this war of extermination, sickly seasons, epidemics, pestilence, and plague, advance in terrific array, and sweep off their thousands and ten thousands. Should success be still incomplete, gigantic inevitable famine stalks in the rear, and with one mighty blow, levels the population with the food of the world.
>
> —Thomas Malthus

AS EVERY schoolboy knows, the Irish famine is one of the capital disasters of history. It broke upon a people who had been dominated by a foreign power for seven hundred years, and who lived in almost bestial servitude, poverty, misery, ignorance, and helplessness. The accounts of contemporary travelers uniformly attest to the extremity of Ireland's condition: one witness asserted that "no mode of life in Europe could seem pitiable after one had seen Ireland . . . the poorest among the Letts, the Esthonians and the Finlanders, lead a life of comparative comfort"; another wrote that "the Negro in his chains" suffered less misery. Subsisting under conditions of systematic exploitation and classic peonage, the Irish peasants had been reduced to living off a single crop, the potato. Indeed in certain back areas of Ireland "cooking any food other than the potato had become a lost art." And yet, as if to demonstrate the ghastly truth of Malthus's theory, the population of Ireland had been steadily increasing. The calamity began with the blight of the potato crops in 1845 and 1846. A variety of public and private schemes for relief were undertaken, but such measures soon proved inadequate as the famine extended through the following years and began to take cumulative effect. Hunger was succeeded by disease, primarily by an epidemic of typhus, but bacillary dysentery, hunger oedema, scurvy, and cholera were also general. The vegetable blight was thus followed by human blight; the lightning-like reproduction, spread, and infestation of the spores of the potato fungus were equaled only by the rapidity with which typhus propagated itself. "A brush in passing was enough to transfer the fever-transmitting louse or its dustlike excrement to a new victim, and one fever-stricken person could pass on infection to a hundred others in the course of a day."

Hunger and disease were followed by emigration, the third great agent in the depopulation of Ireland, and "historically the most important event of the famine." More than a million emigrants from Ireland left the unspeakable conditions of their homeland, journeyed under unspeakable conditions across the Atlantic, and were treated unspeakably when they arrived in North America. An even larger number crossed the Irish channel to take up existence in Liverpool, Glasgow, and the ports of South Wales. Ireland was more than decimated by the famine; according to the best estimates—which are very rough—between 25 and 27 per cent of its population was in one way or another lost.

These are some of the gross facts of the famine, as they are retold in Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger,** a week by week account of the long disaster and a work of unrelieved grimness and horror. Mrs. Woodham-Smith goes in neither for picturesque detail nor comic-pathetic diversions and almost never generalizes. Fact after relentless fact falls on the mind, but they do not deaden perception. In Mrs. Woodham-Smith's hands, abstract statistics come alive as human beings, as she paradoxically undoes the usual effect of statistics, which is to impersonalize, average out, and distance our response to concrete experience. *The Great Hunger* is a work of unusual distinction, informed at every point by the knowledge that facts alone do not amount to history unless we include among them the fact of consciousness.

As the historian G. M. Young once remarked, "the real, central theme of History is not what happened, but what people felt about it when it was happening." The Irish famine itself occurred at a time in which consciousness was in the course of dramatically shifting. If we compare it, for example, with the Black Plague of 1348–1349, the differences are instructive. That earlier event is the worst catastrophe of this millennium of European history; modern authorities estimate that about one third of the

* Harper & Row, 418 pp., $6.95.

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population of the Continent perished. But how was the plague interpreted at the time of its occurrence? According to one scholar, Norman Cohn, it was regarded "in normal medieval fashion, as a divine chastisement for the transgressions of a sinful world." And the religious excesses, such as the flagellant processions, which then sprang up were "in part an attempt to divert the chastisement." After reading such accounts, the reader must conclude that these attitudes and practices were, to adapt a sociological term, "legitimate" responses to the situation—that is to say, they corresponded both to the means or resources then available for dealing with that situation, and to the furthest spiritual and intellectual stage of development to which society had then attained. At the time of the Irish famine, however, a similar attitude no longer elicits our assent. When Charles Edward Trevelyan, the Treasury official in charge of all the programs for Irish relief, gives voice to such sentiments, the reader detects in his pieties not only indifference and hard-heartedness but flummery as well. Mrs. Woodham-Smith dryly observes that, "The thought that famine was the will of God was a consolation to him, and he hoped that the Catholic priests were making this clear." And Trevelyan himself wrote: "It is hard upon the poor people that they should be deprived of knowing that they are suffering from an affliction of God's providence." A number of considerations converge to make this reference to Providence morally unacceptable. In the first place, means had been developed and were at hand to deal with and alleviate both famine and plague, but they were not fully employed. In the second, the religious argument or explanation is at this moment serving a classic ideological function—it is being used to screen other interests and motives, and as a partial extenuation of the British government's failure to provide adequate relief to the starving Irish. And third, at the time Trevelyan was writing, a humane consciousness had already come into existence which challenged the validity of his assumptions and the necessity of his conclusions.

The discrepancy between Trevelyan's attitude and what had become an authentic moral possibility at that moment in history leads us to note that death itself is relative and historical. Death as a fact is absolute, of course, but as civilization's control over nature advances, the number of morally legitimate or acceptable forms of death or dying steadily decreases. (In our culture today, for instance, death in a nuclear war seems on the verge of ceasing to exist as a moral possibility.) One of the things that makes the Irish famine an episode of large historical significance is that we can detect in it just such a shift in consciousness—it is in all likelihood the first disaster of its kind in history which was widely responded to, and continues to be thought of, as a moral outrage.

Still another kind of consciousness can be felt to exist in Mrs. Woodham-Smith's book. And this is the consciousness of our own time, of World War II, concentration camps, and race-murder. The charge has been brought against the British government that its treatment of the Irish people during the famine amounted to genocide, and it "has been accused, and not only by the Irish, of wishing to exterminate the Irish people . . . as Hitler wished to exterminate the Jews." As a historian, Mrs. Woodham-Smith is properly wary of such tempting analogies, and remarks that the 1840's must not be judged by today's standards; moreover, she adds, "whatever parsimony and callousness the British Government displayed towards Ireland, was paralleled seven years later by the treatment of their own soldiers which brought about the destruction of the British Army in the Crimea." Such disclaimers to the contrary notwithstanding, Mrs. Woodham-Smith's book was written in our time and could not have been written before it; the very form of the narrative, the choice of significant details, the emphases and shadings are all in some measure dictated by that fact. Just as in literature a classic work renews itself by impersonating a modern one, so also, as Philip Rahv once remarked, "the past retains its vitality in so far as it impersonates the present, either in its aversions or ideals." Indeed, on a strict definition, history can only be a study of the present, the past itself being merely one mode which the present takes. *The Great Hunger* would not be so interesting and important a work did it not offer this peculiar historical relevance, or if one were unable to feel that the past was being revealed in it as a genuine mode of the present.

IT IS in the scenes of mass horror and death that the impersonation of modernity can be felt most strongly. If the natural calamities of blight and plague were bad enough by themselves, the treatment of the Irish by their landlords and by the British government, that is to say by other human beings, was terrible in the extreme. The terror, of course, has to do with the fact that they weren't being regarded or treated as human beings, that their humanity was being denied. One of the first results of the blight, for example, was the mass eviction of Irish tenants from off the land. Troops and police would move in and demolish the tenants' houses on the spot. "The scene was frightful; women running wailing with pieces of their property, and clinging to door-posts from which they had to be forcibly torn; men cursing, children screaming with fright. That night the people slept in the ruins; next day they were driven out, the foundations of the houses were torn up and razed, and no neighbour was allowed to take them in." Homeless in their own homeland, alienated by official decree from their brothers, the evicted sought refuge "in what was called a 'scalp.' A hole was dug in the earth, two to three feet deep, roofed over with sticks and pieces of turf, and in this burrow a family existed." It is almost as if they were preparing graves

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for themselves beforehand; yet when these living dead were discovered in their holes in the ground, they were "remorselessly hunted out."

The scenes of mass starvation and death endlessly follow: of human beings dying alone, deserted, forgotten, abandoned by their very families; of bodies lying unburied and unknown along the roads and in ditches; of corpses of persons who died of starvation being eaten by cats and rats who were themselves skeletons. The island had become a vast death-camp, an emerald Golgotha, a green and pleasant pit of despair. Out of a multitude of such reports one will have to serve as representative of the rest. Here are the Irish children.

> The worst sufferers were the children; starving children were skeletons, many too far gone to be able to walk. The skin over the chest-bones and upper part of the stomach was stretched so tight that every curve of the breast-bone and ribs stood out in relief. . . . Starvation had affected the children's bones; the jaw-bone was so fragile and thin that a very slight pressure would force the tongue into the roof of the mouth. In Skibbereen, Elihu Burritt met children with jaws so distended that they could not speak; in Mayo the starving children had lost their voices. Many were in the stupor characteristic of death by starvation. Sidney Godolphin Osborne visited workhouses, infirmaries and hospitals and never heard a single child utter a cry or moan of pain—"in the very act of death still not a tear nor a cry. I have scarcely ever seen one try to change his or her position . . . two, three or four in a bed, there they lie and die, if suffering still ever silent, unmoved." . . . By April, 1847, children were looking like little old men and women of eighty years of age, wrinkled and bent . . . even the babies were "aged."
>
> A curious phenomenon was the growth of hair on starving children's faces. The hair on the head fell out and hair grew on the face. . . .

The descriptions of the Irish sufferings during the plague, of what they endured at the hands of the shipping agents and aboard the emigrant vessels, and of what further degradation awaited them on their arrival in Canada and the United States are more of the protracted same. Upon all of which direct comment is almost bound to prove inadequate. In *Past and Present,* an extraordinary book written in 1843, Thomas Carlyle addressed himself to the "condition of England"—which was bad enough. At one point he introduces the anecdote of a poor Irish widow in Edinburgh, who "went forth with her three children, bare of all resource, to solicit help from the Charitable Establishments of that City." She was refused by all, helped by none, until, exhausted, she sank down with typhus, died, and infected her lane with fever so that "seventeen other persons died of fever there in consequence." It is a very curious matter, Carlyle observes. "The forlorn Irish Widow applies to her fellow-creatures, as if saying, 'Behold I am sinking, bare of help: ye must help me!' They answer, 'No; impossible; thou art no sister of ours.' But she proves her sisterhood; her typhus-fever kills *them:* they actually were her brothers, though denying it! Had human creature ever to go lower for a proof?" It is a very impressive piece of writing, and yet one wants to ask if even this is adequate to the reality of the experience, or if anything could be.

One of the more striking implications of Mrs. Woodham-Smith's account has precisely to do with the consciousness of the witnesses of the famine, with the disparity that existed between what was happening and their understanding of what was happening, or between experience and their ability to respond to, much less master it. The constant refrain of those who observed the famine is, "It cannot be described." "The scenes which presented themselves were such as no tongue or pen can convey the slightest idea of. . . ." "It is impossible to go through the detail. . . ." "Believe me, my dear Sir, the reality in most cases far exceeded description. Indeed none can conceive what it was but those who were in it." The modern reference seems apposite again; the refrain recalls the statements made by witnesses when the concentration camps were opened at the end of the Second World War. Reality itself had grown so monstrous that human consciousness could scarcely conceive or apprehend it; reality overwhelmed the human capacity to respond coherently to it. The relations between reality and consciousness are, it goes without saying, inexhaustibly complex, but it may be said that some time during the middle of the 19th century the disparity I have been outlining began to be sensed or felt. One of the chief causes which brought about this development was the growth among the British middle classes of an awareness of what the life of the poor, of the urban and industrial working classes, was like.

If we turn to literature, that part of an age in which we expect consciousness to exist in its fullest and most precise reach, the disparity is even sharper. Dickens was the one novelist of the period who was anywhere near remotely strong enough to grasp directly and imaginatively this order of experience. Indeed he was regularly accused from various sides of "exaggerating" the facts of social distress. Yet if anything emerges clearly from a work like *The Great Hunger* (as it does from other similar documents of the age), it is, as Dickens himself often protested, that his art was a mild representation of what was actually happening. It was mild not by intention but because reality wholly outstripped the capacities of art, the capacities of consciousness, to encompass it. And it is during the Victorian period that an important modern truth begins to emerge—that however mad, wild, or grotesque art may seem to be, it can never touch or approach the madness of reality.

But the statements of the observers that Mrs.

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Woodham-Smith cites, or of men like Dickens and Carlyle, represented only one segment of British opinion. Had more men been capable of such sentiments, the Irish distress would not have been so enormous. But in fact the dominant British consciousness at the time remained fixed at an opposite pole. This attitude was compounded of several elements. To begin with, there was a strain of sheer Podsnappery among the English; there were large and frequent denials that any such thing as a famine was actually occurring, or that the potato blight was anything but a false alarm and "the invention of agitators." To profess a belief that the blight existed, wrote one reliable contemporary, "was as sure a method of being branded as a radical as to propose to destroy the Church." And if at last it ceased to be possible to deny the blight and the famine, then the suffering of the Irish was their own fault. Ireland was a disturbing thought to the English, Mrs. Woodham-Smith writes, and "it was therefore a comfort to be able to believe that the Irish were not starving or, if some of them were, the depravity of the Irish was such that they deserved to starve; and to treat Ireland's desperate appeals . . . as merely another whine from a professional beggar."

The belief in the economic theory of *laissez faire* was undoubtedly the controlling influence in England's treatment of Ireland during the famine. The ideas which combine to make this theory—such as the sacred rights of property, complete liberty of enterprise, the laws of the market and of supply and demand, and of government non-intervention in the economic sphere—were held with fanatical, religious intensity by the largest majority of British politicians and authorities. Any plan for the relief of the Irish was preconditioned by the requirement that private enterprise was in no way to be interfered with. Most of the time this naturally led to no relief. For example, during the first year of the famine, the British government bought certain small amounts of Indian corn with which it both hoped to keep market prices on grain down and to feed a few of the Irish. Since no trade in Indian corn existed in the United Kingdom, this was not construed as an interference with private enterprise. But the scheme, of course, failed: you cannot keep prices down in a market where food does not exist because prices themselves cease to exist. Moreover, the British might as well have purchased stones or rock salt for all the relief the Indian corn provided. Corn was unknown as a food in Ireland; the special facilities needed for milling it did not exist, and so the corn went unground. Inspired with divine ignorance, the authorities then suggested that the Irish eat it unground—in which state Indian corn is not merely indigestible but downright dangerous. Luckily, however—if such an expression in this situation has any meaning—most of the corn remained in warehouses, since the British had, in addition, neglected to supply a way of distributing it to the people. The vaguely lunatic atmosphere of this episode recurs throughout the other operations of relief: from the recipes for soup, composed by Alexis Soyer "the famous French chef of the Reform Club," which "created a sensation in London," to the projects for public works which succeeded in ruining the roads of Ireland, it is all nightmare, impotence, and disaster.

THE POINT is that the English did not really want to relieve the Irish; they did not believe it was morally right, and from the standpoint of economic theory it was unsound and "unnatural." One of the diagnostic attributes of any culture is its attitude toward poverty, and one can read the economic, social, and moral history of England in the history of its Poor Law. Confronted with eight million starving Irish, Charles Edward Trevelyan could write: "dependence on charity is not to be made an agreeable mode of life." Trevelyan was not simply unaware of the almost demented irony of this statement; in it he was expressing doctrines altogether typical of the British governing classes. On the one hand, poverty was an inevitable part of the economic system; the workings of this system were identified with laws of nature and so were not to be tampered with; on the other, poverty was the result of improvidence on the part of the poor for which they were not to be rewarded but punished. One of the results of such thinking is that by the 19th century in England poverty had come to be regarded as a kind of crime, and the poor were treated as criminals—if relief were made as "unattractive and difficult to obtain as possible," then the poor would presumably not be so willing to seek it. This more or less insane solution was applied wholesale to Ireland, but it too did not work. When it was proposed to allow destitute able-bodied men to receive relief by entering the workhouse, it was discovered that the workhouses had to be emptied first "of the aged and the infirm, of widows and children." Apart from producing still more suffering, this measure came to nothing since it proved difficult or impossible to carry out: in the immense workhouse at Tralee the inmates could not be turned out because they had "no clothes to put on and no shelter to which to return, for landlords customarily took advantage of destitute persons being forced to enter the workhouse to pull their cabins down." In the end nothing worked.

In the end nothing worked, and Ireland was left, according to Trevelyan's suggestion, to the "operation of natural causes"—which is to say that it was abandoned. These causes were not only the workings of supply and demand and providence but the causes enumerated in Malthus's theory as well, mass death from starvation and disease. Nassau Senior, the political economist and adviser on economic affairs to the British government, remarked that he "feared the famine of 1848 in Ireland would not kill more

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than a million people, and that would scarcely be enough to do much good." The Irish sickened, suffered, fled, and died in their millions; whether enough of them died to do much good is difficult to determine.

What becomes evident, then, is that the Irish people were as much the victim of ideas as they were of nature's indifference to humanity. They were the victims of intellectual error, and the Irish famine is *an unsurpassable instance of the effects of ideology* in its purest sense. For the doctrines of political economy and of Malthus were unadulterated ideology; they were laws of society pretending to be laws of nature—or as Marx was to phrase it, they represented the "bourgeois relations of production as eternal categories." And even though this ideological thinking worked to the material advantage of the British ruling classes, they too, we now can see, may be counted among its victims. For they were condemned to live in falsehood, and falsehood is always corrupting. Out of the intellectual falsehood in which the British ruling classes were steeped and the spiritual corruption which was its consequence sprang the enduring horror of the Irish famine—the unforgivable selfishness, indifference, and brutality with which the English permitted themselves to treat the Irish. That this treatment was sanctioned by what was then thought of as "scientific" and enlightened principles, and that the English administrators of this inhumanity were sincere in their beliefs and convinced of the advanced and even the benign nature of their views serves only to compound the desperate pathos of the event. But it serves as well to emphasize in that event what is exemplary in a modern way.

For these horrors were perpetrated by the most enlightened and civilized nation in the world during one of the greatest periods of its history. The Victorian period is universally and correctly thought of as the "age of reform"; during that time an unparalleled series of intellectual, scientific, social, and political advances took place in England. The spirit of humanity was abroad then as it has rarely been in human history; the literature of that period, the great novelists and the great Victorian critics, is in sum an incomparable contribution to our humanity and provides an incomparable humane heritage. To be sure, it was also a time of enormous social injustice; but what one usually feels in this regard is that during the Victorian period men had for the first time come into full possession of the consciousness of what social injustice is and means, that they were trying to do something about it, and that the reforming spirit, given enough time, would work successfully toward amelioration. And yet it is also a fact that Victorian England was directly and irretrievably responsible for the incomparable monstrousness of *the Irish famine. The lessons for modernity to read* in this are self-evident.

Whether these lessons will be read is something else again. For we, too, are by both temperament and tradition a reforming society confronted by problems whose solutions reform alone probably cannot bring about. And we, too, are an enlightened civilization bound in by ideology of which we are largely unaware and by contradictions with which we can scarcely cope. Whether we consider domestic problems—civil rights, unemployment, the farm problem —or international ones—the cold war, aid to underdeveloped areas—the difference between what might possibly be done and what will actually be done, is actually being done, is staggering. This difference, this gap between resources and performance, is in considerable measure a result of ideology, of thought which is socially determined yet unconscious of its determination. Since all political and historical knowledge, as Karl Mannheim has demonstrated, is ideological in the sense that it is inseparable from the particular values and position of a thinking subject and a social context, we cannot in such matters hope to attain some kind of absolute or transcendent truth. We can, however, enlarge our awareness of the truth that the ideas of all groups, including our own, are socially determined, that we as well as our adversaries think in ways or styles which are limited by our concrete social and historical situations. Only in this way can we reduce to a minimum the tendency toward self-apotheosis which is so characteristic of political and social ideas and so fatal in its consequences. The British in 1845–1849 were unable to do this, and the black record of the Irish famine was the result. If we today prove equally unable, the outcome is likely to be even worse.

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CONTROVERSY

COULD DISARMAMENT BE POLICED?

The following exchange between ARTHUR I. WASKOW *and* PAUL KECSKEMETI *grows out of Mr. Kecskemeti's piece "Nuclear Abolitionism" (July), which raised several questions about the soundness of the idea that an international police force with a monopoly of nuclear weapons could preserve peace, law, and order in a disarmed world. Mr. Waskow, of the Peace Research Institute and the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, is the author of* The Limits of Defense *and* The Worried Man's Guide to World Peace. *Mr. Kecskemeti is on the staff of the RAND Corporation and the author of, among other books,* Strategic Surrender.

Arthur I. Waskow:

Radical pacifists and Establishment strategists hold at least one belief in common: that the achievement of complete disarmament on a world-wide scale would require a total transformation in the nature of man and the international system. Where they differ is that the pacifists look forward to such a transformation and strive to bring it about, while the official strategists either fear it or believe it to be impossible, and so refuse to accept general and complete disarmament as their goal.

One variant of the strategists' view was set forth by Paul Kecskemeti in his discussion of "Nuclear Abolitionism." Mr. Kecskemeti assumed that the enforcement of general and complete disarmament would require creating a world nuclear "police" force, and then went on to criticize this "supreme world authority" as absolutist and tyrannical, since it would "simply crush anyone who, by rebelling, infringe[d] its absolute monopoly of violence." He predicted that the absence of any world-wide political consensus would compel such a force to "function erratically or be paralyzed altogether," and he expressed the fear that it might unleash a general nuclear war.

Mr. Kecskemeti may be right in his analysis of the results of creating a "supreme" world force with a monopoly of nuclear weapons. But is he right in his first assumption—that disarmament could not be enforced in the absence of such an agency? The United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), for instance, has not made that assumption, and, indeed, the United States in its negotiations at Geneva has been unwilling to commit itself on the question of nuclear arms for the projected "peace force." The ACDA, in fact, was sufficiently unsure of its position to ask the Peace Research Institute for a study of the factors involved in political control of an international police force.

After a process of study to which Walter Millis, Hans J. Morgenthau, Roger Fisher, David Singer, Lincoln Bloomfield, and Richard Snyder made major contributions, the Peace Research Institute submitted its report: *Quis Custodiet?: Controlling the Police in a Disarmed World.* The report proposed an alternative view of the problem—a plan wherein the world force would possess no nuclear weapons and, indeed, would be physically unable, even with the conventional weapons at its disposal, to "crush" a violating nation.

How, then, could disarmament be enforced? Through the construction of a true *police* force rather than a world army—a force that would act by restoring a precise compliance with the disarmament agreement, rather than by crushing a nation that had violated it. Thus the first attempt at dealing with an arms violation might, for example, consist of dispatching ten men with tear gas and pliers to dismantle the key machinery in a factory that had started to turn out tanks instead of automobiles. At this first stage, at least, the Disarmament Police Force might not even arrest or punish the violators and would concentrate instead on putting an end to the violation.

Since even the smallest nation would have enough local police to foil such a raid on its rearmament plants, this kind of enforcement action obviously could not work against a wholehearted determination to break the disarmament agreement. But as Mr. Kecskemeti says, nothing short of war could overcome such a determination (at least on the part of one of the great powers)—and fighting a great war to enforce a disarmament agreement would clearly be absurd. Enforcement would therefore have to be directed at deterring any nation from deciding to break the agreement in the first place, or failing that, from sticking to its decision in the face of police action.

Enforcing disarmament by using the police to deter rather than to suppress would require the establishment of a series of *graduated levels of deterrence,* with the proviso that they be applied in a measure proportionate to their general acceptability: in other words, *the more consensus, the more force.* So far as the sheer realities of power are concerned, they would be recognized by allowing a veto to come into play at a level of force that might be troublesome to the great powers (but only at that level). Nothing would be lost by this provision, for if the great powers were bent on violation, they could always call on enough force to resist the police.

To examine how these principles would operate, let us use a technique the strategists often employ in analyzing possible world crises: a "scenario" illustrating the various problems that could arise.

There is a nine-nation "court" on which each of the four Greatest Powers—perhaps the United States, the Soviet Union, United Europa, and China—is represented. The court has the authority to issue "warrants" for police action under various terms. Any two of the nations represented can summon a squad of up to ten men, armed only with incapacitating gas and billyclubs, to enforce a cease-and-desist order aimed at a given instance of violation. The two votes are enough to initiate this action even against the wishes of a majority, so long as another majority has previously ascertained the existence of a violation. A simple majority of the nine can send up to two hundred men armed with rifles to enforce an order; a majority that includes at least two of the Greatest Powers can order the use of a thousand men armed with subma-

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chine guns and the like; and a majority made up of the Big Four and two other states can send perhaps five thousand men armed with tanks, machine guns, and mortars.

In Country *Z*, a third-rank power with an elective seat on the Disarmament Police Court, a disagreement arises as to the intentions of hostile Country *Q* which has been running a propaganda campaign against *Z* and two of whose spies have just been caught infiltrating *Z*'s border guards. A strong faction in *Z*'s cabinet believes that *Q* is preparing its own people for recovery of an *irridenta*, and is infiltrating the border guard *in order to prevent effective resistance* when the lightning attack comes. This faction argues that the world is unlikely to reverse a *fait accompli* if *Q* conquers the disputed territory, and therefore a stronger defense system is essential. The ten light tanks allowed *Z* under the disarmament agreement are not enough, and—since *Z* has no aggressive intentions whatever—the faction argues that there is nothing wrong with making twenty more tanks.

A "peace party" in the cabinet disagrees, and urges instead that *Z* step up its own propaganda services and perhaps offer *Q* a technical assistance mission that could at the same time be on the lookout for trouble. But *Z*'s President finally compromises: instead of tanks, bullet-proof cars will be constructed, without windows and with a specially tough transmission and tire system, capable of being converted, if necessary, into defensive armored cars. No specific prohibition of this vehicle is found in the disarmament agreement, and so the "peace party" acquiesces.

The inspectors of the International Disarmament Organization* uncover these activities and report them to the Disarmament Police Court. *Q* charges that the "automobiles" are really forbidden tanks, which *Z* indignantly denies. The court rules, 6-3, that the automobiles are indeed tanks, and issues a cease-and-desist order to the manager of the plant where they are being made. Two of the dissenting nations are Greatest Powers who approve of *Z*'s government and dislike *Q*'s, and the third is of course *Z* herself.

Under the majority finding, two of the states represented on the court send a single policeman, unarmed, to serve the cease-and-desist order on the plant manager. He tries to do so, but five local *Z* policemen bar his way, and when he refuses to leave the premises, they charge him with trespassing and cart him off to jail. This causes an uproar in the world press, and *Z* releases the prisoner with apologies but refuses him access to the tank factory.

At this point the two states supporting the original order are joined by two others of the court's majority, providing enough votes to command the Police Force to send six men, armed with tear gas and pistols, to serve the cease-and-desist order again and to resist any force used against them. A warning is first broadcast from an International Disarmament Police helicopter to the tank factory office, but the six Disarmament Policemen are ordered to halt by fifteen of *Z*'s policemen. The Disarmament Policemen read the order from the court aloud, but are again commanded to halt, whereupon they fire a jet of tear gas at the local policemen in their path. The latter, equipped with gas masks, announce they will fire on any Disarmament Policemen who advance. All six men advance nonetheless, the local police fire, three Disarmament Police are killed, one is wounded, and the rest retreat.

At this point the world press explodes. Three members of the famed and honored Disarmament Police have been killed, *Z* is resisting the world's finest court, the disarmament agreement is in jeopardy, the nightmare of nuclear war is recalled. Certain groups and individuals within the two Greatest Powers that initially supported *Z* now withdraw their support, while others continue maintaining—and more strongly than ever—that *Z*'s quarrel is just. One of these Greatest Powers, however, warns *Z* privately that it had better capitulate, for fear of world repercussions. It offers to issue formal warnings against incursions by *Q* if *Z* will abandon the armored-car project. The Disarmament Police Court is called into session and several speeches are made urging dire action against *Z*, but the court votes (five members in favor, three opposed, one abstaining) to try once again to send a minimal force. The five members in favor pledge that as a majority they will vote to send a larger force if this one is resisted.

So five Disarmament Police appear once more at the gates of the tank factory. This time the manager invites them in and, before they can formally serve the cease-and-desist order, tells them it was all a mistake, he wasn't making bullet-proof cars anyhow, and asks them to look for themselves. Even so, they serve the order on him, and inspectors subsequently ascertain that production of the cars has indeed ceased.

BUT WHAT if the violating nation had been one of the Big Four, and had first resisted small police detachments and then vetoed the use of powerful units, refusing to give in despite the growing anger of the rest of the world? In that case, a final escape clause would have to go into effect. If a veto were cast against the use of a given level of force to bring about compliance with an order of the court's majority, that majority would be authorized to revise or cancel the particular part of the disarmament agreement being violated. Other nations would then be allowed to take appropriate action in their own defense against the violator. In effect, a veto would be the signal for a renegotiation of the original agreement. At worst, such a breakdown might escalate into a rearmament race, in which event the disarmament agreement would at least have served the purpose of putting all nations into a "non-alert status."

The philosophy behind the veto in a plan of this kind—that in some cases it would be illegitimate, in others necessary—would apply also to those two apparently insoluble dilemmas impeding the creation of an international force: independent income *versus* nationally contributed money; and transnational *versus* national recruitment and training. Those elements of the police which could be ordered to duty by either minority or simple majority vote would be paid out of an independent fund and be made up of transnational units; those, however, which could be dispatched only by unanimous agreement of the Big Four would come from special units made up in equal parts of citizens trained by, and dominantly loyal to, each of the Big Four nations. The veto would take the form of a withdrawal by the vetoing power of its own quarter of the unit, deliberately so constructed that such a withdrawal would cripple it and make it unusable. This special unit would be financed by equal contributions from the Big Four, thereby enabling those nations to exert a partial or qualified veto over its actions.

Two major problems come to mind in considering this version of a Disarmament Police Force: how could

* The IDO is proposed as a separate organization with very wide inspection powers by both the Soviet and American draft treaties on disarmament. Neither treaty proposes a veto rule for IDO.

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it deter the use of nuclear weapons, and how could disputes between nations be settled without war if there were no world government?

The first problem raises the question of whether the Disarmament Police Force should have nuclear weapons of its own, not only to deter any nation from using them against another nation, but first of all, lest such weapons be used to threaten the Police Force itself. A possible answer is that the Police are not too susceptible to the threat of nuclear attack, because of their relatively high mobility, small size, and ease of dispersal. But this very invulnerability might make their possession of nuclear weapons all the more dangerous, since the threat of retaliation would not be an effective deterrent.

But what about a threat by one nation to use hidden nuclear weapons against another? Let us imagine that nation *R*, to forestall impending political defeat, decided to challenge the political advantage of its opponent *S* by suddenly revealing a small nuclear stockpile and threatening *S*'s largest city with destruction. *R* would probably be ignored, for political ends are extremely difficult to achieve with threats of mass destruction, and generally require more subtle and precise pressures. It is hard to conceive of the United States, say, enforcing racial integration in South Africa not by the conventional political pressures or police and military force, but by threatening instead the destruction of all Johannesburg. Or imagine a threat to annihilate New York unless the United States stopped giving economic aid to Brazil. Would such threats be believed or obeyed, even if there were no opposing nuclear capacity to deter them (as there would not be at this moment, for instance, if South Africa were threatened in such a way)?

For these reasons, the use of small hidden stocks of nuclear weapons by a violator nation seems unlikely—which, however, does not mean that it is impossible. To guard against it, an arrangement like the one David Singer suggests in *Deterrence, Arms Control, and Disarmament* might be examined. Singer proposes that a small stock of deterrent nuclear missiles be stored near the territory of former nuclear powers, but outside of it, guarded by a detachment of the International Police Force without the ability to fire them, and physically accessible to the former nuclear power in case of a threatened use of nuclear weapons against it. Such an arrangement would have the drawback of failing to eliminate the weapons feared by all—and feared precisely because controls against their unauthorized use are so hard to create. The Singer approach, however, might perhaps be useful as an interim arrangement during the last stages of the disarming process and the first phase of existence in a disarmed world. But in any event, the Disarmament Police would not have nuclear weapons of their own.

THE other major problem—disputes outside the arms field—would require the creation of a scale of "world concern" for different sorts of disputes, since some would be more likely than others to pose a threat to the disarmament agreement. Thus a dispute over borders in which one side used its local police, or even unarmed men and women in a "walk-in," might force the smaller and weaker nation toward rearmament. (For example, a disarmament agreement in which *x* men with pistols per one thousand population were allowed for internal policing might put Israel at a grave disadvantage *vis-à-vis* her Arab neighbors.) Thus, too, an internal struggle for power that attracted outside supporters on all sides (as in the Congo) might inspire one or another nation to rearm. But cases of this kind—threats to the national territory and struggles for control over the symbols of governmental legitimacy—are rather special in their close relation to the use of arms and violence. Economic boycotts and embargoes, propaganda "wars," competitive economic subsidies, espionage, even bribery and blackmail are far less likely to anger or threaten a nation so greatly as to make it rearm.

These two categories of disputes—those that are conducive to rearmament and those that are not—should therefore be treated differently. For the first type, it may well be necessary to create a Border Police to guard threatened boundaries and a Special Situations Police to cope with domestic disorder at the point when it begins to endanger international peace and disarmament, both forces to operate on principles similar to the Disarmament Police but to be separate from them. Thus the Border Police might begin by walking a boundary with binoculars in hand and end by defending it with machine guns, as a consensus developed among various nations favoring more serious action. Since border disputes and domestic disorder would be lower on the scale of "world concern" than the central question of disarmament itself, a wider consensus and a larger vote would be required to send a contingent merely to police a border than to send a Disarmament Police unit of the same size.

The kind of conflict unlikely to lead to rearmament would be carried on with no holds barred. That is to say, nations would be allowed to compete with one another by means of propaganda, economic aid and pressure, and other "non-lethal equivalents of war" without any interference from the Police Force, and their relative power would, as it always has in the international system, determine the outcome of their struggle. This safety-valve for conflict would tend to preserve the disarmament agreement. Just as labor unions and management have found it easier to eschew violence once the legitimacy of purely economic battling was recognized, so nations that had the resources to achieve their ends without recourse to arms would be more likely to defer to an international institution that was trying to deter rearmament.

By these means, freedom—the freedom that so deeply concerns both Mr. Kecskemeti and myself—could be ensured. Human impetuousness and excessive police zeal could be tolerated and controlled, since the physical power at the disposal of aggressive impulses would be limited. The efforts of free nations to safeguard their own liberties and advance those of others could be continued—indeed strengthened—if they were pursued with economic and political weapons exclusively

Perhaps this model of a disarmed world can offer hope to those who are not prepared to delay getting rid of the bomb until such time as the transformation of man or of nations will have taken place. Certainly the model requires further examination and research, but its existence should at least inhibit the easy assumption that a disarmed world must be an Orwellian world. The choices before us are not confined to Eden, Hell, or 1984; a disarmed and decent world is possible this side of Utopia, and perhaps Mr. Kecskemeti can join in working toward it.

* * *

Paul Kecskemeti:

Apparently there are many areas of agreement between Mr. Waskow and myself. He seems willing, for instance, to grant my point concerning the terroristic, "Orwellian" implications of disarmament schemes that call for a world nuclear force to pre-

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serve peace, law, and order. Yet at the same time, his discussion makes it appear as if it were I who had gratuitously dragged the issue of a world nuclear force into the debate on nuclear disarmament for the ulterior purpose of discrediting the whole idea. This is not so. My article dealt with the policy proposals put forward by two distinguished advocates of nuclear disarmament, Max Lerner and John Strachey, both of whom champion the creation of a world nuclear force as the means necessary for curbing aggression in a disarmed world. I felt that their approach was profoundly wrong, and said why. But I also pointed out that this aberration does not constitute a clinching argument against nuclear abolitionism as such.

My quarrel with the enthusiasts of a nuclear world force is entirely unrelated to the basic assumption Mr. Waskow reads into my argument as well as into that of the authors with whom I took issue. Neither Mr. Lerner nor the late Mr. Strachey can be described as radical pacifists; neither has ever maintained that complete disarmament "would require a total transformation in the nature of man and the international system." On the contrary, as I repeatedly stressed in my article, both authors go to considerable pains to demonstrate the realistic character of their analyses: they expect complete disarmament to come about without any radical change in the "nature of man and of the international system." I, too, treated the problem within this realistic frame of reference. With regard to disarmament, the question I raised first and foremost was whether, things being what they are, we can expect an agreement to be concluded soon. Obviously there is a considerable difference between asserting that general disarmament appears unlikely under present conditions, and asserting that only a total transformation in human nature could render it possible. In my article, I made only the former assertion.

Mr. Waskow doubts that I am right in assuming that "disarmament could not be enforced" without "creating a 'supreme' world force with a monopoly of nuclear weapons." But this assumption is not mine; credit for it should be given to Messrs. Lerner, Strachey, Bertrand Russell, *et al.* My point was an entirely different one—namely, that neither disarmament nor a peaceful world order *could be maintained by* nuclear terror. The question of whether disarmament could be enforced by other, non-terroristic methods, I left open.

In his piece, Mr. Waskow undertakes to demonstrate that non-terroristic methods would indeed work. But from the scenarios he gives us, it is clear that he has constructed, not a method of enforcement that would operate successfully without large-scale violence, but rather a dual system, within which only *certain* violations would be corrected while others would remain untouched. The method, that is, would work only in the easy, trivial cases. When it came to serious infractions, all interested powers, as well as the Disarmament Authority itself, would have to *waive* enforcement in order to avoid armed conflict.

The veto is needed, according to Mr. Waskow, because any attempt to enforce disarmament clauses against an obdurate great power would inevitably raise the prospect of a large-scale, possibly nuclear, war. But this is precisely the thesis Mr. Waskow had exhibited earlier as proof of the perverse anti-disarmament bias of the "Establishment strategists"! According to Mr. Waskow, also, there may be cases in which we cannot "restore compliance" without "subduing" the violator, and since this would be impossible when the violator was a great power, the result would be a stalemate. To resolve it, Mr. Waskow can only counsel abandoning the objective of restoring compliance altogether—which again puts him with the "Establishment strategists."

Now there is considerable merit in the proposition, presupposed by Mr. Waskow's analysis, that disarmament infractions ought not to be treated as *casus belli* in themselves. To my mind, however, this proposition has several implications extending even beyond the acknowledged one of making the enforcement of disarmament agreements subject to a veto by the great powers. The most general implication is that *we can have peace without complete general disarmament:* this follows inescapably as soon as we postulate that the powers should remain at peace, infraction or no infraction. Here, too, Mr. Waskow, without seeming to realize it, is implicitly agreeing with the "Establishment strategists."

Once having included the veto device in his system, he can no longer argue that complete disarmament is a *sine qua non* of peace. What he can, and indeed does, argue is that a disarmament regime which is nominally complete without nevertheless being infraction-proof would still represent something far superior to the system that prevails at present. He advances several interesting arguments in support of this thesis. One is that the moment general disarmament were agreed upon and put into effect, no strong incentive would remain for any of the great powers to seek to impose its ends by violence and to rearm for this purpose. Another is that whatever infractions might be expected to materialize would in all probability be infinitesimal to begin with and easily handled by the precision methods of police enforcement.

NEITHER ARGUMENT looks convincing to me. In speculating on the issues that might lead to violent conflict and rearmament in the disarmed world, Mr. Waskow can think only of remote, bizarre, Ruritanian tempests in teapots. Would it not be better to think in terms of the tense political issues that are with us today, hanging suspended precisely because everybody realizes that fighting over them would lead to disastrous consequences? In the real world, we have to worry not about *Z* and *Q*, but, for instance, about the German Federal Republic. I make bold to predict that in a radically disarmed world, the issue of German reunification (plus a dozen equally explosive ones) would come to a head in short order, and that the disturbances we might expect would not be limited to unarmed demonstrators swarming over state frontiers.

Let us imagine, for example, a rally of students in East Berlin calling for reunification by democratic vote. Many workers might join, and the East German security forces might go over to the demonstrators, forcing the Communist government to flee. As things are now, the lessons of past uprisings would probably suffice to inhibit explosive political developments of this sort. But in a world where only minimal security forces existed, the same lessons might have the opposite effect. Any momentous political upheaval, moreover, would immediately upset the existing world political balance, and a ballooning war crisis could easily result. It is very plausible to assume, for example, that the security forces of the neighboring satellite states would intervene to restore the DDR, which, in turn, would automatically entail intervention by the Federal Republic's security forces. The political fate of Europe and the world would hang in the balance, and the great powers would be induced to start rearming immediately in order to pro-

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tect their vital interests. The Disarmament Authority would soon find out that its "true *police* force," equipped to ensure compliance by precision methods, could not achieve anything. It would be easy to construct many realistic political scenarios leading to a similar denouement.

It seems to me, in fact, that the "true *police* force" idea contributes nothing essential to the clarification and solution of the disarmament problem. Such a force would be able to perform its mission only in *some* cases of violation while being powerless in others (the really serious ones). Moreover, in the trivial cases where police action could succeed, physical intervention by a constabulary would hardly be necessary. Once an offending government had decided to cease persevering in open violation, I see no reason why the continued physical existence of the illegal machinery or hardware should call for a supranational constabulary armed with demolition equipment. If demolition were recognized by all as a legal requirement, the offending government could be expected to furnish the necessary personnel and equipment itself. If it were not so recognized, demolition would not occur in any case. The direct, physical police approach would seem, then, to be either superfluous or ineffective.

Disarmament, as a matter of fact, is *not* a police problem. The decisive variable is the interested governments' willingness to cooperate; and where cooperation is the key factor, coercive enforcement as such does not arise as a significant issue. An area for law enforcement by true police methods exists only where there is a good chance of restoring legal order even against wholly *uncooperative* offenders—and restoring it by limited, legally circumscribed, minimally violent methods of repression. Even in a domestic setting these conditions are not always satisfied; in the international one, they almost never are.

THIS IS not to say that disarmament agreements could be made viable without *any* kind of "policing." The point is only that this part of the problem cannot be fruitfully approached in terms of physical coercion. In particular, the formula, "the more consensus, the more force," strikes me as profoundly misleading. What Mr. Waskow seems to be saying is that so long as the great powers agree among themselves, they can raise the level of punitive violence against small countries without having to fear untoward consequences for themselves. Maybe so. But it is pernicious to base a peace policy upon an equation of "peace" with "terror."

In general, we cannot postulate simple, linear relationships between such quantities as "consensus" and "force," or their converses, "tension" and "relative stability." War, for example, both presupposes and generates high consensus *within* each belligerent camp and high tension *between* the opposing camps. (In times of peace, on the whole, *both* consensus and tension tend to be lower.) Also, overt violence among opponents does not vary directly with the degree of tension. Highly tense situations can be relatively "stable" in the sense that no overt violence occurs for long periods: while in situations of less tension, the incidence of overt violence can nevertheless be higher. Finally, it seems to me wholly erroneous to believe that lowering the level of armaments—to the point, finally, of complete disarmament—must necessarily reduce tension and increase stability. Tension over crucial political issues could survive such moves, and if so, stability might decline critically.

No, I do not make the "easy assumption that a disarmed world must be an Orwellian world." My image of a successfully pacified and disarmed world is even less Orwellian than Mr. Waskow's, because I would not allow for violence to mount in proportion to consensus. I merely assume that a disarmed world could be far more unstable than our present nuclear environment is. Hence, I believe that in our theoretical analyses we must weigh the very real and important advantages of eliminating weapons of mass destruction against the equally real risks (including rearmament) of greater instability. Moreover, we also have to consider the *factual* questions of whether or not, when, and on what terms we can really achieve nuclear disarmament. Since we apparently cannot have it just for the asking, it is our duty to examine the question of how peace can be preserved while nuclear weapons continue to exist.

To work for a peaceful, decent world this side of Utopia—these are indeed the terms I would use to define the task my fellow analysts and I are charged with. I deliberately say "peaceful" instead of "disarmed"; the first term indicates the objective, the second, a possible means of achieving it, but the two are not synonymous—even as Mr. Waskow himself shows. A world which is not disarmed can be relatively stable (peaceful), and war can break out at any stage of disarmament. Too much disarmament under conditions of high political tension could, as I have already said, theoretically generate extreme instability; therefore we should not bemoan the fact that when political tension is high, radical disarmament is unlikely. We can regard such a situation as generating an adaptive mechanism that makes for a restraint in behavior which counterbalances sharp discrepancies in political values, objectives, and interests.

How reliable is this adaptive mechanism? Could it not break down in a crisis? Does it not produce destabilizing effects of its own? And assuming that the existing nuclear weapons do—through deterrence—render war less likely, do they not at the same time guarantee beyond a doubt that war, if it does break out, will be maximally devastating? These are legitimate questions, and any serious analysis of peace, war, deterrence, and disarmament must deal with them in as searching a fashion as it can. But it is precisely because the situation often involves conflicting requirements—what might be good as a way of increasing restraint, for example, could be bad as a means of reducing potential destruction if and when war did come, and *vice versa*—that we must go about our task in a non-utopian spirit, searching for the best possible solution rather than the absolutely perfect one. My article was a plea for exactly that, and Mr. Waskow in his piece advocates the same general outlook. What baffles me is how he could have read my polemic *against* the Eden vs. Hell, all-or-nothing approach as a manifestation of that approach itself.

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GERMAN WHITEWASH

THE SURVIVORS. By NORBERT MUHLEN. *Thomas Y. Crowell. 288 pp. $3.95.*

Reviewed by THEODORE FRANKEL

IN THE December 1962 issue of *Der Monat* (West Berlin) Norbert Muhlen published a plaintive article on the German image in contemporary American letters. Everybody, it seemed, was being beastly: Katherine Anne Porter was just plain anti-German; William L. Shirer in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* had neglected to mention the other totalitarian dictatorships possessing "more or less terrible characteristics" that existed after World War I, and besides, his work showed a lack of "balance" and "thorough personal research"; Kay Boyle had written that Germany's present and future were "an indissoluble part of her past"; T. H. Tetens in *The New Germany and the Old Nazis* had resorted to tactics like presenting regrettable exceptions as the norm, citing questionable sources, and "disregarding evidence contrary to his own thesis"; dozens of paperback books on the Nazi period, though factual enough in content, were distorting the German image by focusing exclusively on the grisly past.

Behind this flood of misinformation—intended to mislead the American public into believing that the Germans were still Nazis and would never change—Muhlen discerned two moving spirits: the anti-German prejudices, possibly understandable, of a "relatively small but influential portion of the American reading public" (whom he did not care to identify); and the activities of various left-wing publishers, authors, reviewers, and propagandists (also unidentified) in the service of Moscow, whose aims were to divert public attention from the present misdeeds of the Soviets and to sow mistrust against the nation whose support is now indispensable to the defense of the West.

Presumably to counter this smear campaign, Muhlen has now published his sixth book on Germany. Unlike his gaudily titled past efforts —*The Incredible Krupps*; *Schacht, Hitler's Magician*; *The Vanishing Swastika*—this one is called, soberly enough, *The Survivors,* and is an attempt to assess the situation of the Jewish minority living in Germany today and its outlook for the future. As could have been predicted from the tenor of his article in *Der Monat,* Muhlen's forecast is very favorable; unfortunately, however, the procedures he follows in this book are such as virtually to discredit his opinion. Not only are his tone and manner offensive, but he also makes use of every rhetorical trick of which he accuses his opponents, and then some. This is a great pity—for in the end a good cause is compromised. I, for one, agree with Muhlen's two major points—that Germany has changed for the better and that contact between Germans and Jews is necessary —but I am embarrassed to share them with him.

Take the language Muhlen has fabricated for *The Survivors.* Rapturous, simpering, effusive, it makes its apology for the German past by the simple Victorian expedient of lacking words for anything really bad. Even Auschwitz has its silver lining. If I seem to be exaggerating, let the reader meet Frau Renate Lasker-Schueler, a popular German-Jewish TV reporter who "has no unpleasant memories of her school days under Hitler, though during the war she was imprisoned for three dead years in the concentration camp of Auschwitz." Revisiting Germany after the war, "she met and later married a brilliant German . . . in their TV programs she has often described her Auschwitz experiences in a warm, moving appeal." And for variety here is another concentration-camp graduate, "a Jewish woman in Hamburg" who upon being asked by her eight-year-old daughter, what a concentration camp was, replied, "Something like a vacation resort, but not so much fun."

Those samples are typical of Muhlen's approach. The first part of the book, entitled "Facts and Figures" (though it contains no more real data than does any other section), takes the reader at a gallop through German-Jewish relations from 1945 to 1961. In some sixty pages it presents a historical sketch so impressionistic and superficial that one wonders whether it could have been written by the same man who faulted Shirer for lack of "thorough, personal research." Though the picture it draws of a torpid, spiritless Jewish community is undoubtedly correct, it is Muhlen's own lack of insight or sympathy that most strikes the reader. For example, he tells us that only 5 per cent of the Jewish community attends Sabbath services, but he has not taken the trouble to find out whether this is really a sign of unconcern (as he makes us think) or whether it is a delayed reaction to Auschwitz. Likewise, his explanation for the amazingly high rate of intermarriage—from 1951 to 1958 German Jews chose three times as many non-Jewish as Jewish partners—in terms of the scarcity of Jewish girls sounds remarkably superficial; one suspects that far different needs are at work here.

IF Muhlen is inattentive to what goes on below the surface of Jewish behavior it is, at least partially, because he is so preoccupied with extenuating German behavior in the past and exaggerating German merits in the present. He remarks of Hitler's persecution of the Jews that "some Germans approved of this active anti-Semitism; others did not," quite as if there had been an open debate on the merits of what he so delicately calls "active anti-Semitism." At another point he speaks of the Nazis' awareness of "popular disapproval of their persecution of the Jews," letting the matter drop there with no further qualifications. This, from the man who has accused T. H. Tetens of "disregarding evidence contrary to his own thesis"!

Even more disturbing is Muhlen's

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frequent use of the device of trying to make the Germans look better by making the Jews look bad. To cite one illustration, consider how brusquely Nahum Goldmann is put in his place in Muhlen's version of the Goldmann-Adenauer talks on the moral aspects of restitution: "Adenauer looked Goldmann straight in the face and replied: 'I share your view that this is primarily a moral problem . . . I am therefore ready to accept the claim of one billion dollars as a basis for future talks, and will send you a letter confirming this before the day is out!' "

Or, for another example of the technique of invidious comparison, take the story of K.B., and the German reparations—a subject which repeatedly throughout *The Survivors* spurs the author to heights of lyric effusion: ". . . the significance of such a large figure as the 6 billion dollars Germany will have paid in reparations [at the termination of the program], like the figure of 6 million murdered Jews, often fails to penetrate human imagination. What this redress could do for a single individual, is clear in the case of K.B. This German Jew . . . had returned in 1954. His application for restitution claimed the worth of his parents' residence—they had died natural deaths in Munich in the early Hitler years—his father's factory building, bank account, valuables and so on . . . payment for his own confiscated library, wardrobe, and other lost objects, full restitution for the Jew tax and *Dego* contribution . . . indemnification claims . . . lost profits . . . reparations for the time his father had been in a Nazi jail . . . K.B.'s fare to America . . . damages. All these claims were investigated one by one, accepted and finally paid . . . Only one of his claims was rejected; the court did not consider a back injury suffered while he worked as a handyman a direct outcome of his racial persecution."

Note the sledgehammer subtlety with which Muhlen makes his points: the casual mention of "natural deaths"; the massed aggregation of claims which is bound to prejudice the reader against the Jew; the detail, included it seems as an afterthought, in which only the alertness of the German court prevents the insatiably rapacious K.B. from fleecing the German people with a phony claim; and, of course, the massively offensive opening statement in which the six billion dollars in reparations are balanced against the six million Jewish deaths. This story of the greedy K.B. is, moreover, the only case study Muhlen offers on the question of individual restitution claims.

THE SECOND part of the book, "Germans Meet Jews Again," covers much the same ground and focuses even more exclusively on "human interest" stories. One item reports at considerable length a notorious anti-Semitic incident which, if I read Muhlen right, was largely the fault of the Jew involved. He discusses, briefly, several other genuinely anti-Semitic incidents and then touches upon desecration of Jewish cemeteries, to sum up with scrupulous impartiality: "The number of Christian ones desecrated in the same period was somewhat higher, but comparatively, of course, lower."

As for the extent of Nazi influence in the new Germany, Muhlen, while acknowledging the existence of Nazi groups, is at considerable pains to deny *any and all* importance to them, thus going much further than most German newspapers or periodicals would. There are many sweeping claims like the following: "Deprived of all influence, and unable to hold public office after they had served their sentences, they [former Nazis convicted of major crimes] were generally despised." Yet, as of this writing, the case of Admiral Doenitz, Hitler's official successor, is still agitating the German public. Some time ago, this convicted war criminal was invited to address the graduating class of a German high school; as could have been expected, he spouted all the old Nazi ideas from the platform, but not a single member of the faculty found reason to challenge him.

Or again: "The surviving hard core Nazis have no access to positions of power in the new Germany." Need I remind Muhlen of the case of former SS *Brigadenfuehrer* and Chief of the Security Police in occupied Holland, Wilhelm Harster, who held the position of *Oberregierungsrat* for communal finances in Bavaria since 1956 and was dismissed on ground of "demonstrated incompetence" only a few months ago? Or of the affair of Dr. Theodore Oberlaender, who was dismissed from his cabinet post as Minister for Refugees several years ago because of his dubious past in East Europe, but who got back on the CDU ticket and was elected to Parliament only last May? Or the matter of Herr Theodor Saevecke, head of the treason section of Bonn's security police until last February, who has been suspended pending a new investigation into his activities as head of the German security police in Milan in 1943 and 1944? Or of the discovery this past July that one of Germany's three security services had been seriously compromised by the employment of former SS men in responsible positions—persons who had been acting as Soviet agents for years under the threat of Communist blackmail?

"It is understandable," Muhlen writes, "that many Jewish survivors feel uneasy on meeting and dealing with those who were or seemed to be their persecutors; but the majority of these, by 1961, had passed the test of regeneration."

May I recall to the author that in 1961, the German government felt it necessary to pass the so-called German Judges Law which gave judges and public prosecutors the opportunity to retire voluntarily without citing reasons. By 1962, one hundred forty-nine men had taken advantage of this law. Now, in 1963, the Senate of Hamburg and the government of Hessen—neither of which is Communist or anti-German—have proposed an amendment to Germany's constitution to compel the remaining Nazis to retire.

ALL THIS, to be sure, must be seen against the very good record of the German courts in putting more than five thousand Nazi criminals behind bars. Nevertheless, Muhlen's failure to look at the negative side amounts to a falsification of the facts, on this question as well as on the matter of German reparations. No doubt, West Germany deserves credit for the care with which it has handled both individual restitution claims and reparations to the State of Israel, but Muhlen, as usual, overstates the case. Surely, the five billion dollars in aid which Germany has received from its victors is at least as singular a phenomenon as the three billion it has paid out to its victims!

The last third of the book, "Castaways and Pioneers," presents a series of vignettes of individual German Jews (among them the two I cited at

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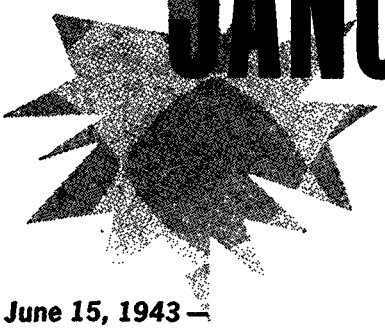
LEON WELLS

THE JANOWSKA ROAD



June 15, 1943 –

Some of the bodies in the fire have their hands extended. It looks as if they are pleading to be taken out. Many are lying around with open mouths. Could they be trying to say: "We are your own mothers, fathers...."

July 1, 1943 –

We all try to save the best of everything for the sick. Today, when any one of the men in charge of the clothing found anything that was believed to be of some use for the sick, he hid it in his pocket, running the risk of torture or even death....between us a real and true feeling of comradeship has grown.

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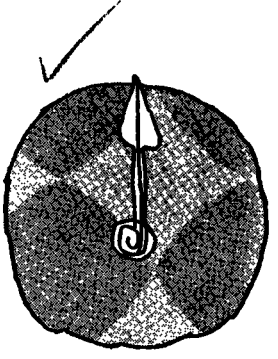

and other essays by Dan Jacobson

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the beginning of this review) that add up, despite what Muhlen intends, to a very depressing picture indeed—a picture of rootless people, cut off from German society, from their fellow Jews, and from their own past. In the final chapter, however, Muhlen expresses the high-minded hope that the Jewish community in Germany will experience a new birth of vitality. This chapter ends with a quote from Friedrich Hoelderlin: "Alas, the dead cannot be brought to life unless 'tis love that does so." Since the book opens with a cliché—may the final epitaph of the six million be that they did not die in vain—it seems fitting that it should close with an equally pious platitude on their eventual resurrection through love.

All in all, *The Survivors* is an unappetizing little book which pushes its message—the emergence of a new Germany—with all the gimmicks at the disposal of the public relations industry. In doing so, its author not only slights his ostensible subject, the Jews, but through exaggeration, bias, whitewash, soft soap, and the use of tar and brush, destroys the credibility of his message. Though it is true that there have been great political improvements in the German Federal Republic since 1945, a book of this kind does little service to that truth. And the sad and bitter story of the situation of the Jews in present-day Germany remains to be written.

SO IT ISN'T A WEDDING

THE WORLD IS A WEDDING. By BERNARD KOPS. *Coward-McCann. 264 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by JONATHAN MILLER

THIS IS a daft, rather sad book and the fact that it made its way into print at all says something about the sentiment of the English Left since Suez. The autobiography of a youngish Anglo-Jewish playwright, it is all of a piece with Arnold Wesker and Joan Littlewood, with Aldermaston and the *Universities and Left Review*'s Coffee House in Carlisle Street. I seriously doubt if such a work would have even got past the publisher's reader before 1956. Since then, however, a tide of anti-intellectual left-wing populism has passed over the country and books of this sort have not only been published but praised as well.

Like the populism of the American Radical Right, this English movement of the Left amounted to a revolt against modernism. That is to say, while its declared aim was the surrender of a national deterrent and the abdication of costly imperial adventures, the underlying impulse was directed against the growing inaccessibility of high-level government and corporate decision-making. It was against the ruthless, supposedly inhuman calculations of *Realpolitik* and *for* the simple, immediate virtues of common life. Hence there was a rise among English intellectuals in the fortunes of working-class culture and a growing interest in the culture of any group which was thought to find satisfaction in the natural, forthright exercise of its own native values. Novels and plays idealizing the rugged vigor of working-class life got good acceptance, as did the cockney masques of Joan Littlewood. The irreverence, style, and strident energy of lower-class teen-agers came in for approval from Colin MacInnes, who also admired the lackadaisical warmth of the newly arrived West Indian immigrants. In fact, MacInnes's praise of the new English Negro summarized all the esteemed values of the new spirit. The Negro, MacInnes said, was sunny, easy-going, and refreshingly unpunctual, as against the rigidity and facelessness of the men of the Warfare State.

All this was a sort of political pre-Raphaelitism or a William Morris dance set to jazz. C. Wright Mills's *The Power Elite* became an unofficial CND pamphlet and a Jamaican steel band led the procession from Aldermaston. Arnold Wesker and Bernard Kops found a natural welcome under these circumstances, more, perhaps, *as Jews* than as members of the New Left. Like the working classes, the Jews have what strikes the English eye as a colorful life of their own. More than that, they have an esoteric ceremonial calendar. Thus they come into the admired category of "folk," which puts them, in turn, nearer to the impulsive heartfelt origin of things. No wonder, then, that Jews have been popping up all over the place. Two enormously popular musicals by Lionel Bart featured on the one hand a jolly, bowdlerized Fagin and, on the other, a cut-price *Yiddishe Momma* Courage. Lovable Jewish ironists turn up in Frank Norman's *Fings aint what they used ter be,* in Joan Littlewood's *Sparrows Can't Sing,* and in Anthony Newley's *Small World of Sammy Lee.* And finally, Centre 42—sponsored by the Trade Union Council to bring drama to the factory floor—opened its program with Kops's own *Enter Solly Gold.*

THE SECOND reason for the ready adoption of such literature has more to do with the supposed vision of the Jew than with his "folksy" behavior. The vision, as advertised, is marked by a shrugging ironic simplicity that has been taken as a godsend by a movement which has given up logical rigor in favor of the "crunch" of wise innocence. Herman Kahn can be refuted more convincingly with a phrase like "So who needs a bomb?"—which has the timbre of intuitive wisdom and the sad smile of an absolutely unanswerable, ancient, suffering sagacity—than with pages of careful analysis.

Kops comes on with an Uncle Tom version of both these "Jewish" talents. *The World Is a Wedding* glares with colorful effects and gives a rich dose of folkways, both Jewish and cockney. The opening paragraph alone sets the tone for this picture. "Take one Jew and immediately you have an opposition party. In our family it was no exception. Our home was like a Yiddishe parliament, with seven opposition parties . . . and we shouted most of the time, mainly to ourselves. There was always someone laughing or crying at any given moment." Oh the laughter, the tears, the eloquence!

Then there is the philosophical "vision," the simple piercing honesty which takes us beyond all troublesome complexity to such lucid ironies as: "So what's so wonderful about caviar? Just rich man's anchovy"; or "What was a house but some bricks which separated people from the Universe?"

That Kops can write such drivel is rather surprising in view of his claim that as a very young man he "plunged into the mainstream of literature by reading T. S. Eliot," and that at about the same time he "went on a voyage of discovery into the endless, beautiful continent of Russian literature where I remained happily and am still wandering." Wide reading tends to scorch out the sort

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of deathless pensées to which Kops is prone, or at least it encourages a certain self-protective reticence. Kops, however, is actually literature-proof —one of those auto-didacts who can read till they are blue in the face and still be capable of saying: "I wanted to know how I fitted into the order of things. I wanted to discover my roots and establish some sort of identity."

The impulse to create in such people is often irresistible. They have oceanic, inchoate feelings of creativity, like a phantom pregnancy which swells and stirs and which, though it may never deliver itself, disturbs the bearer with thoughts of imminent greatness. (Kops says that he "felt creation like a disease" within him.) More often than not, this sensation of brimming fertility fails to develop into anything more constituted than Kops's "disease," licensing the sufferer, in his own mind at least, to behave with artistic oddness. But it may also lead him into scribbling like a mad thing and jotting down a load of trivial nonsense, all very "philosophical." Like Kops. Like this book, which provides a perfect and tragically self-revealing picture of the syndrome of romantic abortion.

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THE ABOLITIONISTS. By LOUIS RUCHAMES. *Putnam. 259 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by HARVEY SWADOS

THIS ANTHOLOGY of the early writings and exhortations of the abolitionists, principally from 1830 to 1848, inevitably takes on special significance in 1963. Throughout this centennial year of the Emancipation Proclamation we have been reminded almost daily of how percipient Wendell Phillips was when he observed, "That proclamation frees the slaves but ignores the negro." Nevertheless, in and of itself the Emancipation Proclamation represented the successful culmination of some three decades of abolitionist agitation, and so it is only natural that civil rights partisans of today should be tempted to draw parallels between that era and ours.

Although Mr. Ruchames scrupulously refrains from diagramming these parallels, they continually leap to the eye in his introduction, outlining the development of abolitionism, as well as in his annotated selections. For example, Mr. Ruchames writes as follows of the cul-de-sac in which abolitionism found itself in 1829: "The greatest need was a re-examination of its basic strategy which had been based upon 'moderation' and 'temperance' in describing the nature of slavery and the responsibility of the slaveholder; the espousal of 'gradualism' and colonization of former slaves to areas outside the United States as the most feasible methods of hastening the end of slavery; and an emphasis upon convincing the slaveholder that it was to his economic interest to liberate the slave and utilize free labor instead." Then, after listing some five reasons why "moderation" failed, Mr. Ruchames brings William Lloyd Garrison onto the stage, "with a revolutionary philosophy that challenged every basic assumption of the existing anti-slavery societies." And the contemporary reader is irresistibly reminded of the radical shift in the new Negro's drive for civil rights, from the social welfare work of the Urban League and the courtroom tests of the NAACP to the direct action approach taken by SCLC, CORE, and SNCC.

The strategic insufficiency of gradualism for our own revolutionary times has been recognized not only by the new generation demanding Freedom Now, but also by those who have themselves been in the forefront of the prolonged legal contests. Thus, Judge Thurgood Marshall was recently quoted in the New York *Times:* " 'I'm a gradualist,' he said, with reference to the long struggle to enforce the 14th and 15th amendments dealing with Negro rights, 'but one hundred years is gradual enough.' "

THE RHETORIC of the newly militant anti-slavery groups of the pre-Civil War period was built on much the same assault upon the traditional arguments of legalism, custom, and moderation. In 1833, John Greenleaf Whittier noted specifically that "the term immediate is used in contrast with that of gradual," when he pleaded for "immediate abolition of slavery; an immediate acknowledgment of the great truth, that man cannot hold property in man; an immediate surrender of baneful prejudice to Christian love; an immediate practical obedience to the command of Jesus Christ: 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.' " Fifteen years later, Theodore Parker, addressing the 1848 convention of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, was willing to concede that "Something can be done by the gradual elevation of men, by schools and churches, by the press." "But that is slow work," he hastened to add, "this waiting for a general morality to do a special act. It is going without dinner till the wheat is grown for your bread. So we want direct and immediate action upon the people themselves."

So, with the arrival of Garrison (at least as Mr. Ruchames arranges the scene for us), came the conquering spirit of revolutionary immediacy and absolute opposition to compromise or opportunism, and the result was inevitable—as are some further comparisons. Thus the Rev. Amos Phelps, in his 1834 Address to Clergymen, explained that *"Ministers are, in an eminent degree the HINGES of public sentiment in respect to all prevailing sins.* Once get the public sentiment of the ministry right, and

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then inspire them with courage to speak that sentiment out, and you revolutionize the public sentiment of the community in a trice." The 1960's, too, have felt the force of an inspired Negro clergy, with the Kings, Abernathys, Shuttleworths, and Taylors striking to the hearts not only of the Negroes but of the white clergy as well, and—when their sentiment soars high enough—of many who stand outside the boundaries of organized Christianity.

When Martin Luther King intoned at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial, "I have a dream," the incantation mesmerized the hundreds of thousands of us gathered there, and many of the millions watching and listening across the country. And we are tempted to establish a close connection between the rhetoric of the abolitionists, clergymen, and lay orators alike, and the freeing of the slaves; and in consequence to look to that rhetoric for inspiration in the final freeing of their descendants.

At its best, we can see that rhetoric as ennobling and inspiriting, and startlingly contemporary in its applicability. The fact remains, however, that it can also grow shrill and tiresome in its self-righteousness, and the historical evidence for its being a paramount element in the freeing of the slaves is, to say the least, far from decisive. It is useful to have a corrective to the traditional academic portrait of Garrison as a simple nut and of the Garrisonians as ineffectual do-gooders; but still this book groans under the load of the preaching of so many humorless zealots, and its editor—a Hillel director at Smith, Amherst, and the University of Massachusetts—gives no indication of his awareness of that weight. On the contrary, his absolute hero, with only passing reference to the critical estimations of him by other abolitionists, and none at all to those of later historians, is the compulsive Garrison. The reader is left to presume, as he gropes through Mr. Ruchames's fragmented and confusing account of the period, that simply because Garrison cut to the moral heart of the matter, and because he knew, rather than patronized, the Negro, he had hold of the truth as no one else did. Moreover, the reader is invited to conclude that a single revolutionary truth will in all likelihood prove as efficacious today as it seems to have in Garrison's.

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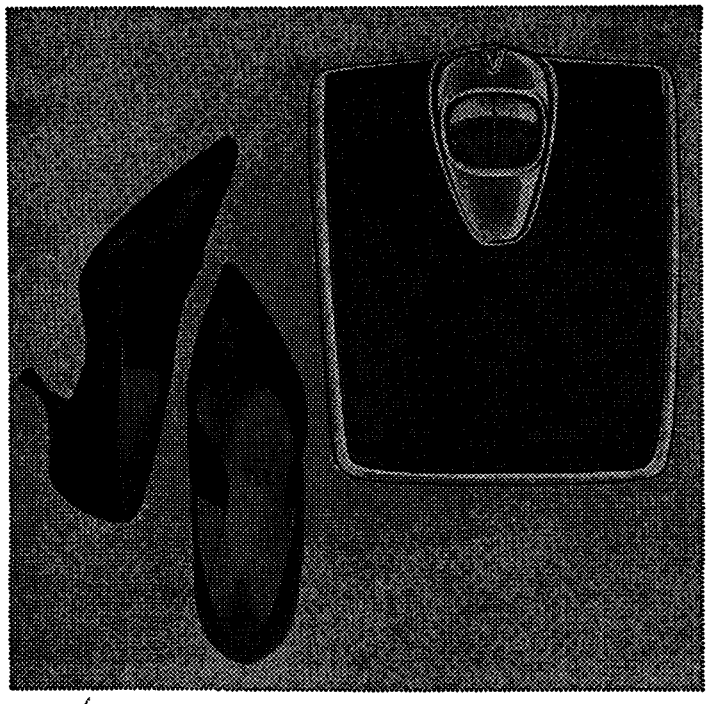

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But surely we have no more warrant for reading this into an earlier era than we do for believing it about our own time. The fact that Negroes are now chaining themselves to dump trucks or producing orators of a kind not heard in the land since William Jennings Bryan does not mean that they can afford, for example, to dispense with court battles. And the ultimate triumph of the abolitionists' call for absolute emancipation with no nonsense about compensation or colonization does not in itself prove Garrison was right in renouncing politics, in burning the Constitution, in calling for Northern secession.

Indeed, the narrowness of Mr. Ruchames's view, while it does bring into focus certain historical parallels, forecloses the possibility of investigating certain other ones, which might have proved even more fruitful. What of the question, for example, of non-violence as strategy or as tactic? Wendell Phillips said, in a statement not reproduced in this anthology, "I confess I am not a non-resistant. The reason why I advise the slave to be guided by a policy of peace is because he has no chance."

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Or what of the Negro's quest for reliable allies? Here too the observer who sees the Negro freedom movement passing over willy-nilly into the economic realm, and forced to make contact with white trade unionists and with the unemployed—both already being swamped, like the Negro, in the tide of automation—ought to consider the relevance of Richard Hofstadter's closing remarks in his essay on Wendell Phillips:

> . . . the abolitionists themselves learned much from participation in politics, not the least of which was the lesson that a strategy dictated by absolute moral intransigence, however defensible in logic, was not so effective in reality as a strategy qualified by opportunism. They learned that the abolition of slavery must be linked with other, more material issues to reach its full political strength. Political abolitionism, as it became more and more dilute in principle, somehow became stronger and stronger as an actual menace to slavery . . .

One need not necessarily agree with such conclusions to deplore the fact that Mr. Ruchames displays no evidence in this anthology of having confronted Hofstadter—if only to quarrel with him—or any other of the historians who have been rethinking our past in terms more complex than those of contempt for the abolitionists or pietistic approval of them. It is a pity, because a rereading today of the abolitionists' travails and triumphs is not only timely but urgently needed.

THE HORSE'S MOUTH

WRITERS AT WORK: THE PARIS REVIEW INTERVIEWS (Second Series) Edited by GEORGE PLIMPTON. *Viking 368 pp. $6.50.*

Reviewed by ERIK WENSBERG

IF THE purpose served in giving these literary interviews their present title is nothing so homely as exactitude, the choice does suggest that the publisher knows where we itch. It might go without saying that this volume, which gathers together conversations with Hemingway, Eliot, Pound, Katherine Anne Porter, S. J. Perelman, and diverse others, presents, like its predecessor, everything *but* the writer "at work." In fact, it is only the rare, blunt remark (by Miss Porter or Mary McCarthy or Henry Miller) about the dearness of privacy or the despair felt at interruption that reminds us what a writer's work is like. More noticeably at work here is the writer's surprising, sometimes dizzying charm; or failing that, some other forgotten virtue of civilized talk: fidelity to the point at hand, or perhaps a chastening plainness. Indeed, before the whole performance has gone very far one begins to hope, vulgarly or not, that the subjects were paid; not one of them is dull.

Only the interviewers are. And of course this is entirely proper. Even so, the range of questions seems, half-way through the book, maddeningly narrow ("Do you type or compose in hand? Do you show your work to friends for criticism? Is your work a direct reflection of personal experience, or . . . ?"). But what would one have? The imagination runs wild in considering what such interviews *might* be like. These are done with unfailing respectfulness and grace and come as close as taste and cultivation could to fulfilling what I take to be the purpose.

Certainly the *Paris Review,* which first published the interviews in both volumes of *Writers at Work,* has been, for its ten years of life, a graceful and adventurous little magazine. These interviews stand for one aspect of its adventurousness, and having become, so to speak, the *specialité de la maison,* for one aspect of this period. The magazine, started in 1953 by a group of Harvard graduates, remains one of the few among innumerable literary journals begun in the 1950's to make a success. What was noticeable from the start—what William Styron, an advisory editor, promised in a gruff epistolary introduction to the first issue (signed: "Bill Styron")—was that the magazine was more interested in "creative work" than in criticism. This emphasis was, to put it mildly, a relief. What was unspoken, though implicit in the choice, and what was more than congenial to the mood of younger readers and writers at the time, was that the magazine would make no use of *history*—no "perspective" and no distinctions of the sort dictated by a view of art as continuous over time. Nothing professorial, in short. Unlike the English *Horizon* or *Scrutiny,* the American *Partisan Review* or *Hudson Review.*

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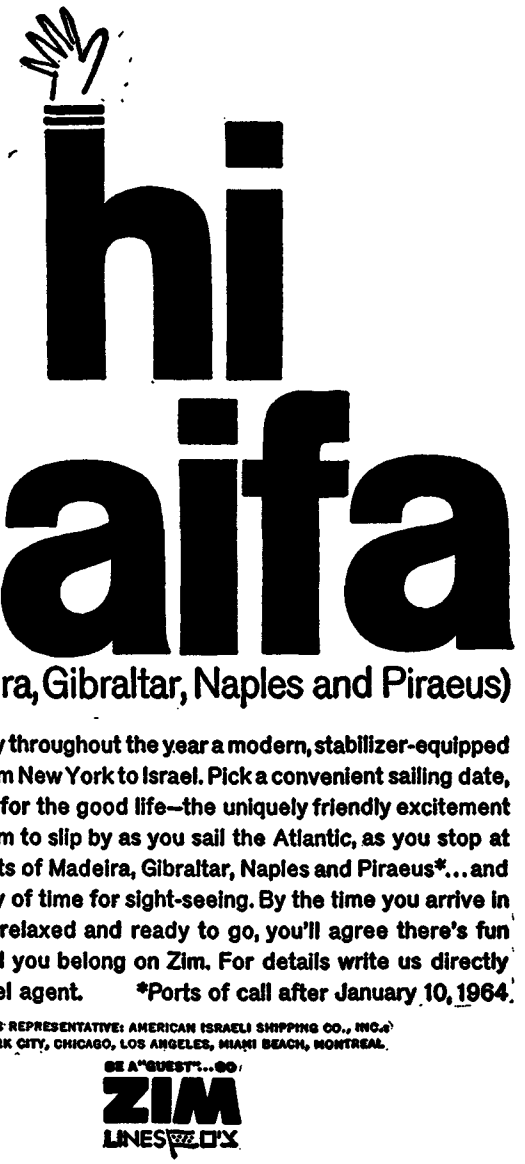
the *Paris Review* was to remind one of the "traditionless" 20's, signalizing clean breaks and new worlds through the revelation of fresh sensibility in stories, poems, and pictures. Art was what was wanted, pure but not simple; and art of the present, free of comparison or precedent. The history of living artists—in the form collected here—is to the best of my knowledge the only "perspective" the editors have ever invoked.

If, assembled in books, such history turns out after all to be of interest chiefly to English majors and to the earnest acolytes of the ubiquitous workshops, this is because a job-lot of literary shop-talk palls pretty quickly on the ordinarily cultivated reader. On the other hand, there must surely be more English majors and more workshops than there were in 1953. For one's sense of it is that the beginning of the *Paris Review* coincided roughly with the nearly unanimous assent by educated Americans to the propositions of the New Romanticists who preached with such vigor to the sour and baffling post-World War II period: the proposition that among the extraordinary powers of art are social deliverance and personal therapy; the proposition that art is almost the only irreproachable cultural action; that it is a nearly religious resort. Thus the *idea* of art has never had such a boom. And so there will be many younger readers who will mistakenly approach *Writers at Work* as being more closely comparable to *Lives of the Saints* than to Vasari. The others, with only an M.A. thesis to grind out, can be assured that, unlike the refractory personal letters and journals of the past, these "documents" contain fairly straight answers to fiercely serious questions: they are straight from the horse's mouth. . . .

The trouble is that even the most intent and skillful interviewers can elicit only uncertain memories, critical simplicities, and some brave, modest—even sheepish—attempts to explain a point of technique or to wrestle with a long-standing superstition. Grandeur recedes when the information we are given about the time of day each author works, where he sits, his writing implements and surrounding furniture all begins to suggest (indeed to become, in the Hemingway interview) a kind of Manual of Professional Hygiene, or else a pilot study for Fifteen Model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Rooms for the Writer, to be unveiled at Lord and Taylor. Through all of the questioning runs a depressing note of undisclosed hope. It sounds clearest in the recurrence on the interviewer's tongue of phrases like "the process of writing" and "the process of creation." It is the impossible hope of conjuring an answer to the mystery of creation and of talent. Finally, the Lit. students have it all their own way. They can at least find out where early drafts of "Ash Wednesday" were published. Lonely, aspiring authors will put the book away, lonely.

But for the reader seeking neither research material nor initiation there are, as I said at the start, many moments of sheer entertainment here. The measured and unmistakeable voice of Robert Frost chats on and on with an evasive virtuosity that reminds one of Picasso drawing those pictures with a flashlight for Clouzot's camera. When her dazzlingly well-informed interviewer prompts Marianne Moore about the contents of a letter someone wrote her, Miss Moore exclaims, stopping everything quite dead, "Really?" Mary McCarthy appears to get a whole new idea, before our very eyes, about a work in progress; the interviewer's blush of pride is almost audible.

But can one *review* these conversations? It is rather like reviewing a party; worse yet, a party given in honor of someone's mania—in this case, the interviewer's. As an instance, Miss McCarthy's legendary vivacity comes through beautifully; but one begins to wonder whether her almost continuous mood of autobiographical revelation aims at some sort of testament, some secular witness; or merely at providing entertainment appropriate to the occasion. Just as in her work, the self-revelation is almost consistently comic, but trivializing. Her account of her own political involvement in the 30's could hardly be jauntier or more amusing to herself. Its oddest aspect, of which she seems only partly aware, is the emphasis she reports on *position* as against *activity:* the friendships blasted, the inflamed introspection, all, apparently, over what one professed, rather than what one did. But is her account, given these odd conversational circumstances, quite true?

Perhaps it is. In his introduction, the late Van Wyck Brooks remarks that "most of these writers are politically passive . . . political issues have become at once too simple and too massive, beyond the scope of writers and literary thinking." On the evidence of the rest of the book, one would have to agree. And surely one aspect of the present view of art is a misapprehension, if not a plain, implacable hatred, of politics. If the children's teeth are a bit soft on ambrosia, there are indications here that the fathers have eaten rue: Henry Miller, Ezra Pound, Lawrence Durrell, Miss McCarthy, all, one way or another, would teach a reader of these interviews that politics and political ideas are a mug's game. Only Boris Pasternak, by an irony needing no comment, can go on for pages about a trilogy of plays he is writing whose inspiration is the political history that he had known and was still moved by.

The Pasternak interview is likewise unique in conveying some sense of genuine personal relationship between the interviewer and the subject. It is a relief, it even adds credibility, that the form is straight narrative and that we feel none of the purposefulness of the graduate student who has run "a source" to earth. In the end, I suppose that the only serious reservation one might have about these bright and well-made souvenirs comes from the fact that the same interviews, in bound volumes of the *Paris Review* in one university library I know, are already pocked and serrated with the underlinings and contentious marginalia of Contemp. Lit. students. It saddens me to think they might greet the next work of one of these very gallant troupers with a cry: "But I read where you *said*. . . ."

TEA AND SYMPATHY

Outsiders. Studies in the Sociology of Deviance. By Howard S. Becker. *Free Press. 179 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by Harris Dienstfrey

Outsiders, Howard S. Becker's study of deviance, is mostly an insider's view. Becker belongs to the group of sociologists, usually called "interactionists," who examine social behavior from the viewpoint of the actor. To the interactionists, the primary data of social psychology are the individual's own interpretations of the situations that confront him—whether he is an ordinary, respectable citizen or one of the wayward or morally halt. To investigate deviance, then, Becker turns to the deviants themselves, and to their enterprising "discoverers," the various sober citizens who define what is deviant and what is not.

The result of allowing individuals to speak for themselves—which is far from being a common sociological practice—is to enable them to emerge from behind the screen of public clichés and ignorance. This is what Oscar Lewis did in *The Children of Sanchez* for the deviant group known as the poor. As R. S. Baker noted several months ago in Commentary, it is what a tape-recorded autobiography, *The Fantastic Lodge,* did for drug addicts. (Becker, incidentally, conducted the interviews from which *The Fantastic Lodge* was assembled.) And it is what Becker does in *Outsiders.* The method of using "autobiographical" data is an exciting one, and *Outsiders* is an excellent example of the fascination such material exerts. Becker has the further distinction of being one of the few sociologists up to now who has attempted to develop a general sociological theory on the basis of this material.

Becker sets his study within a fairly simple scheme. His main point is the suggestive notion that deviance, like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder—or, as is sometimes the case, in the fiat of the lawmaker. Deviance is neither absolute nor patently recognizable. Nor, Becker argues, is it easily achieved. It is the result rather of a series of many choices, for, like successes, deviants have careers too. And like almost everyone else, they also belong to individual cultures (sub-cultures in sociological parlance) that teach and sustain them, and in particular aid the deviants in offsetting the conventional morality to which most cannot help but remain sensitive.

Becker makes these general observations concrete in the intriguing case studies that form the core and best part of *Outsiders.* He examines two deviant groups, one criminal (marijuana smokers), the other merely eccentric (dance musicians)

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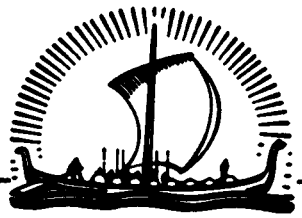
and by judicious use of direct quotations, presents the career patterns and cultures of both. These quotations, it should be emphasized, constitute Becker's basic data; they are not used as mere examples. The quotations from interviews do not appear in *Outsiders,* as in most sociological works, like patches of rich Faulknerian prose in a parched exegetical wasteland. They are the material with which Becker sets out to make a coherent picture of two deviant worlds. This he does with great sophistication and care.

What, then, are marijuana smokers and dance musicians like?

In the first place, they are like everyone else—and then they learn to be different. In something of a how-to-do-it chapter, Becker explains that there are three phases through which an individual must pass to become a successful marijuana user. First he must learn the proper method of smoking. "Take in a lot of air, you know," one interviewee tried to explain, "and . . . I don't know how to describe it, you don't smoke it like a cigarette, you draw in a lot of air and get it deep down in your system and then keep it there." Then he must learn to perceive the effects of proper technique. But to most novices the effects of being high are quite frightening, so the last stage in successful marijuana use is learning to enjoy the effects one has learned to perceive. As an experienced user explained of the apprentices:

> They think they're going to keep going up, up, up till they lose their minds or begin doing weird things or something. You have to like reassure them, explain to them that they're not really flipping or anything, that they're gonna be all right.

These quotations show clearly that becoming a marijuana user is very much of a social activity. As the novice moves from step to step, Becker explains, the group helps him develop the justifications which he will need in order to neutralize in his own mind the legal (and social) disapprobation of his behavior. Justifications range from arguing that marijuana is less harmful than other more common vices —alcohol, for instance—to insisting that it actually has beneficial effects —like creating a strong appetite. But it is not so much these justifications



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that displace the conventional outsider's conception of the drug, as it is "the company of other users." As Becker suggests, a man rarely becomes a deviant without a group to help him.

THE dance musician passes through a different kind of deviant career, and accordingly has a different kind of culture. First of all, he must deal with the demands of his parents (or his wife) to have a conventional life —a day job and steady pay. If he cannot somehow quiet these demands, for himself at least, he will leave off being a musician. If he can, he faces a second decision: whether to play for others (and money) or for himself (and art). His choice in this respect largely determines which musical cliques he belongs to, the kinds of jobs he will accept, and the type of success at which he aims.

> See, if you play commercial like that, you can get in with these cliques that have all the good jobs and you can really do well. . . . You can count on making that gold every week and that's what counts.

Whether his choice is money or art, the dance musician invariably regards the audience as an enemy and the customer rather than himself as the "outsider." The following comment by a young Jewish musician, "who definitely identified himself with the Jewish community," reveals this hostility in a particularly graphic way.

> When you sit on that stand up there, you feel so different from others. Like I can even understand how Gentiles feel toward Jews. You see these people come up and they look Jewish, or they have a little bit of an accent or something, and they ask for a rumba or some damn thing like that, and I just feel, "What damn squares, these Jews," just like I was a *goy* myself.

The dance musician responds to those pressures of his work which make him feel different by being different. His culture teaches him a private language and unconventional dress and behavior. Musicians "have to talk a special language, dress different, and wear a different kind of glasses. And it just doesn't mean a damn thing except 'we're different.' "

After reading these chapters on marijuana smokers and dance musicians, one can only conceive of them, and by implication of deviants in general, as being quite normal, and not at all touched by any distinctive madness or distress. They presumably are neither monsters, nor thwarted noble savages, nor even grist for a social worker's mill, but human beings who are happy and miserable in the usual degree and mixture. The bizarreness of their behavior lies mainly in the tourist-like perspective of the "outsider."

Becker seals off this untypical, one might say deviant, view of deviants by avoiding any investigation of the reasons they come to behave as they do. Showing how reasonable their behavior is from their point of view, he seems to assume it is reasonable from everyone's point of view, and needs no causal explanation. But is Becker's own perspective sufficient?

The problem in brief is that Becker has used as his major examples two extremely mild forms of deviance. Neither smoking marijuana nor being a dance musician is individually debilitating; nor is either a social threat (notwithstanding, in the case of marijuana smokers, official policy, some members of the far right, and middle-class critics of Lenny Bruce). The non-causal approach he has taken in analyzing these types of deviance and the general conclusions he has drawn are hardly adequate to more severe forms of waywardness, to juvenile delinquency, say, or drug addiction.

Deviants at this end of the scale cannot be viewed merely as "normal" though eccentric individuals. Their behavior often is socially dangerous and often personally destructive. Moreover, as *The Fantastic Lodge* reveals, the drug addict's behavior is also pathological in the sense that it is compulsive rather than deliberately chosen. To say that such types of deviance lie in the eye of the beholder may be minimally true, but the statement's relativistic implications are completely misleading. Society sometimes has an excellent reason for seeing certain acts as deviant—to protect its own well-being. In regard to such behavior, an understanding of its causes is obviously important, for, if possible, the acts should be prevented. The point is—which an analysis of dance musicians and marijuana smokers does not suggest—some deviants really are "different."

Becker is properly anxious to refute the attitude (odious when held by officials) that deviants per se are a kind of sport or monster who have only a distant kinship to ordinary human beings. *Outsiders* in contrast sees deviance as a normal part of life. The book's important sociological and human lesson is that the way a man becomes and stays a deviant is the way he becomes and stays anything else. But the part of the story Becker leaves out, in this otherwise admirable study, is that to be a deviant is sometimes a terrible and terrifying way of being objectively unlike almost anyone else.

XENOPHON VERSUS HEGEL

ON TYRANNY. By LEO STRAUSS. *Free Press. 228 pp., $5.50.*

Reviewed by GEORGE LICHTHEIM

THE REAPPEARANCE in print of Professor Strauss's study *On Tyranny* derives its special interest from circumstances only indirectly connected with the original publication. In 1954 M. Alexandre Kojève, France's leading Hegel scholar (in private life a high official in the French administration), published a critical essay entitled *Tyrannie et Sagesse* in which he dealt in the grand Hegelian manner with Strauss's work. Translated as *Tyranny and Wisdom* for the volume under review, this essay of forty-five printed pages was sufficiently important to draw a lengthy rejoinder from Strauss (originally published in French and later included in the collection of essays issued by the Free Press in 1959 under the title *What Is Philosophy?*). In the volume now before the public all these writings have been brought together in a very attractive format, not omitting thirty-three pages of Notes to Strauss's interpretation of Xenophon's *Hiero,* which makes up the bulk of Part One.

It has been necessary to dwell on these externals because they are in fact tightly linked with the core of the dispute. Strauss is so completely under the spell of the Greeks in general, and Xenophon in particular, that he presents his argument in the

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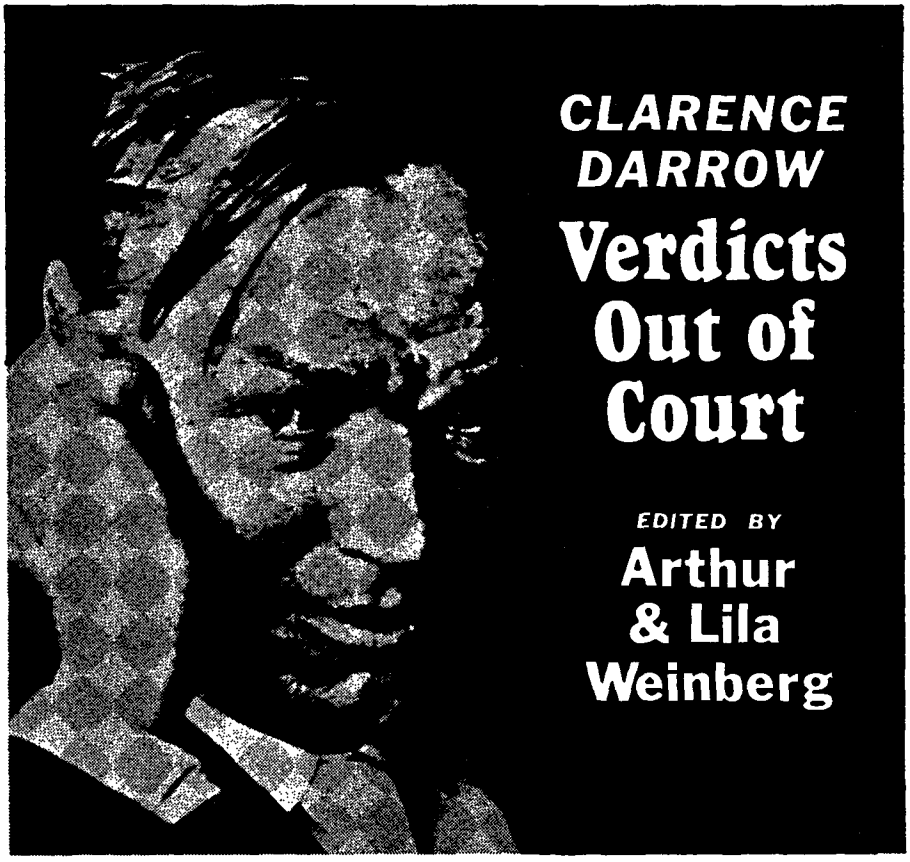
form of an eighty-page analysis of Xenophon's text (a new translation of which was commissioned by Agora Editions, the editors responsible for the book, to enable the reader to follow the finer points of Strauss's analysis). For such perfectionism no praise can be too high. If Xenophon is a school classic, and if Strauss is on his way to becoming a modern university classic, then the least one can say is that both authors have been fortunate in their publishers. As for Kojève, it was high time he was introduced to the English-language public. His *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel* (Paris, 1947) is caviar for the general, and moreover shows no sign of being translated. Apart from this one major work, he has written, or at any rate published, very little, and even in France is known mainly to a small circle of initiates. His influence has, however, been very considerable, not least in starting the postwar Hegel renaissance.

After these lengthy preliminaries, can we at last get down to the real topic? Unfortunately, the answer is no, and for this Strauss must take the responsibility. What is really of importance comes out in his controversy with Kojève, but before he arrives at this point the reader has to make his way through Xenophon's *Hiero* and Strauss's detailed exegesis of this rather slight and inconsequential piece of writing. I am of course aware that in saying this I am offending against the accepted canons of literary decency and good taste. I am also offending against Strauss's basic assumption, which is that Wisdom is encapsulated in the classical texts he has chosen to interpret. Being in this matter on Kojève's side, I shall compound the original felony by suggesting that the full meaning of Xenophon can be grasped by an intelligent schoolboy at the first reading. This is such an outrageous statement that I shall make no effort to defend it. I merely observe, in passing as it were, that Xenophon has always been a favorite with schoolmasters (though less so with their pupils).

The *Hiero* (in case some of my readers have been unjustly deprived of a classical education) takes the form of an imaginary dialogue between the tyrant Hiero and Simonides, a "wise man come from afar" (like Strauss) to instruct the wretched tyrant in the arts of govern-



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ment. Hiero is wretched because, as he explains to Simonides at somewhat excessive length, a tyrant is necessarily unloved and in constant fear of his life. Simonides, who is not a tyrant, merely a poet and wandering scholar with no public responsibilities, thereupon explains to Hiero that, though remaining a tyrant—i.e., not a legitimate ruler, but one governing by fear—he can nonetheless make himself more popular by various devices whose nature has not greatly changed since those days. The argument prefigures the wisdom of Machiavelli. In fact—not to put too fine a point on it—it *is* the wisdom of Machiavelli. Strauss, who dislikes Machiavelli, makes light of this and credits Machiavelli with a specifically modern, i.e., non-Socratic, viewpoint, though he also says that "the *Hiero* marks the point of closest contact between pre-modern and modern political science." A writer less enamored of the Greeks might have put it somewhat differently, perhaps even to the point of hinting that the politics of Athens were not really all that remote from those of Florence: especially after democracy had collapsed in both places, and cynical young aristocrats (Xenophon, though less amusing than Alcibiades, clearly is a horse from the same stable) had discovered the secret of imposing upon their fellow-citizens.

However that may be historically (Strauss is not greatly interested in history), the reader is treated to a subtle distinction between "good" and "bad" tyrants. Xenophon's Simonides sets out to show Hiero how he can "rule as a virtuous tyrant" (p. 96), and his learned exegete by implication subscribes to this noble enterprise. The reader must decide for himself whether it is feasible. There have, of course, been enlightened despots, though even at their peak, in the 18th century, they frequently disappointed their tutors. In his reply to Kojève, which makes up the concluding part of this fascinating volume, Strauss concedes (pp. 199–201) that, on the evidence presented by Xenophon, Hiero does not sound like a very promising pupil; yet on an almost despairing note he inquires whether this may not have been due to an accidental failure to ask for the proper advice on how to become a "good tyrant." This is followed by a passage in which Strauss observes: "The general lesson is to the effect that the wise man who happens to have a chance to influence a tyrant should use his influence for benefiting his fellow men. One may say that the lesson is trivial. It would be more accurate to say that it was trivial in former ages, for today such little actions like that of Simonides are not taken seriously because we are in the habit of expecting too much" (p. 201). What we are in the habit of expecting is not having to bother about tyrants. Strauss may not realize it, but his pessimism could become infectious. So far as political understanding goes, there is not much to be got out of Xenophon or any other minor Socratic. The *Hiero* in fact is trite.

This point leads to a consideration of Kojève's essay, which is by far the most brilliant part of the book, and the element that raises it above the level of mere exegesis. Although Strauss is an Aristotelian, it takes the challenge of the Hegelian Kojève to bring out his full commitment to Aristotle, which is why his rejoinder to Kojève is a more interesting and incisive piece of writing than his original study of Xenophon. Kojève fortunately wastes no time on Xenophon's inanities, but comes straight to the point. Strauss had demanded to know how a wise man can live under a tyranny. Kojève replies that it is his own fault if he has no influence over the tyrant, since the latter is in fact dependent on his advice. Contrary to the vulgar prejudice against philosophy as useless, the philosopher is quite competent to tender such advice, for he sees the whole picture (in Hegelian terms, "the truth in its concreteness"), while the statesman—who need not be a tyrant—never sees more than what is immediately relevant to his purpose. No regime, moreover, can get on without general ideas and beliefs, which are ultimately supplied by philosophy. A reign of "pure terror" is unthinkable, since no one can personally terrorize more than a handful of people. Loyalties are essential to every form of government, and the concept of loyalty leads back to philosophy, which is the vision of the historical process as a whole. Thinkers rather than poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. Kojève cites Alexander's relationship to Aristotle, which was basic to the conqueror's revolutionary aim of transcending the *polis*

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in the direction of a universal empire.

He also drops a tantalizing hint about Hegel, who admired Napoleon, and whose implied defense of revolutionary despotism has had practical consequences in our own day. At this point Kojève runs into the difficulty of having to make room for the kind of tyrant who places himself consciously in the service of a revolutionary idea. Strauss promptly picks up the challenge by reminding him of Stalin. In the context of this particular debate the rejoinder is legitimate, but Strauss goes on to suggest that on Hegelian principles—which he traces back to Machiavelli and Hobbes—there are no moral bounds to tyranny. This is inexact, for Hegel would have recognized that—to cite a topical example—the destruction of Germany as a nation was the price paid by the Germans for allowing Hitler to obtain power.

Kojève and Strauss enter into a fascinating dispute over the philosopher's role in the "city." The burden of Strauss's original argument had been that, under a constitutional government or even under a "virtuous tyrant," the proper role of the philosopher is to attend to the eternal verities which are perceived in contemplation. Kojève points out that this attitude renders the philosopher not merely politically impotent, but even useless as a thinker, since as an isolated individual shut up within his four walls he cannot get beyond subjective certainty, which is no guarantee of truth. Left alone with his untested notions he is not distinguishable from "the lunatic who believes that he is made out of glass, or who identifies himself with God the Father or Napoleon." In order to test the validity of his thoughts he must leave his study—or his Epicurean "garden"—and venture out into the market place, where he encounters other men, not all of them professional philosophers. He will then have joined the "Republic of Letters," whose constant sociability is at least a cure for solipsism, and "a sufficient guarantee against the danger of lunacy." The Academy, or "Republic of Letters," however, has the drawback that it shuts the thinker off from the political sphere, where ideas are clothed with flesh. If he decides to break through this barrier, he will naturally be drawn to tyrants, because they are more likely than ordinary statesmen to cut the Gordian knot of public sloth with some energetic stroke. Kojève presents a sophisticated apology of this situation, on the grounds that "the conflict of the philosopher faced with the tyrant is nothing else than the conflict of the intellectual faced with action . . . the tragedy of Hamlet and of Faust." This is a very Hegelian view which Strauss, not unreasonably, finds alarming. It is in fact the outcome of a situation similar to the post-Napoleonic age, and as such quite possibly less permanent than either Strauss or Kojève supposes. The present moment is not perhaps a very good one for recalling that successful action can be democratic, and that even Hegelian philosophers can be democrats; but the reservation has nonetheless to be made.

While Kojève and Strauss clash at practically every point, their deepest differences relate to what Strauss calls "historicism," and what Kojève describes as the understanding of history. For Kojève the very existence of philosophy, and of philosophers, is a historical factum which may be brought to an end by the practical realization of those ultimate aims that make their appearance in all the

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great utopias of literature. Strauss, who thinks in terms of archetypal situations which the classics have described once and for all, denounces the very notion of such an outcome. For him, the human problem—so far as politics is concerned—is fixed eternally in the classical (biblical and Socratic) texts, and the modern attempt to disregard these verities represents a monumental aberration, for which the world will have to pay (unless Reason reasserts itself) by sliding into universal tyranny. His disagreement with Kojève is particularly acute at this point because it ties in with the Hegelian depreciation of classical wisdom. Although Hegel was himself in the classical tradition—the "German Aristotle" quite deliberately went back to Plato for some of his basic concepts—he tended in his historical writings (e.g., in his lectures on the history of philosophy) to treat the ancient world in a somewhat condescending manner, as a preparatory stage to later and more ample (theological and other) revelations. From the Hegelian viewpoint—which in this matter was simply the Christian viewpoint—the classical world was a kind of intellectual nursery which Christendom had outgrown. This attitude became fixed among his followers who substituted "Europe" for "Christendom." To Strauss this attitude is intolerable because it undercuts his profound conviction that eternal truth is to be found in the classics with their Natural Law doctrine, and nowhere else. The movement of thought since Machiavelli (he does not mention Vico) is to him a movement away from the Truth.

The sharpest reproach Strauss can urge against Kojève (and Hegel) is that of atheism. At least since Hobbes and Spinoza, every major modern thinker has been an open or concealed atheist. Yet Strauss—while well aware of this fact and deeply alarmed by it—refers to atheism with horror, as though it were some kind of obscene disease caught by infection, instead of being the characteristic attitude of modern man. Doubtless the fact of something being the typical modern attitude does not render it immune to criticism; yet Strauss meets the challenge not at its deepest level, but at the level of alarmist forecasts concerning the terrible consequences to be apprehended from the complete and world-wide triumph of a totally secularized outlook. Even if the consequences are in fact going to be as disagreeable as he thinks, his opponents are not likely to heed his call for a return to the past. It is a necessary consequence of the modern commitment to intellectual honesty that such appeals must be dismissed. A philosophy which flinched away from its own insights as being too bleak and comfortless, would hardly be worth having.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

THEODORE FRANKEL, *a native of Germany, has been teaching there for the past several years.*

JONATHAN MILLER, *a new contributor, is a member of the group of English satirists whose show, "Beyond the Fringe," has been running for the past year on Broadway.*

HARVEY SWADOS'S *new novel,* The Will, *is being published this fall by World.*

ERIK WENSBERG, *still another new contributor, was the founding editor of the* Columbia Forum.

HARRIS DIENSTFREY'S *most recent piece was "Doctors, Lawyers, and Other TV Heroes" (June).*

GEORGE LICHTHEIM *is one of our contributing editors.*

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Left. This 1925 oil-on-canvas by Pablo Picasso is from the collection of Samuel Marx. It is so strikingly different from the 1941 Picasso in the Winston collection or the 1905 canvas belonging to Albert Lasker that one finds it difficult to realize that all three were painted by the same artist. *Center, La Résistance Inutile . . .* Jean Honoré Fragonard's charcoal sketch with wash is a superb example of the freedom and spontaneity that the great artists of the 18th century got into their drawings. From the Davray collection. *Right.* A group of ancient Greek, Etruscan and Roman bronzes, silver and pottery from the Walter C. Baker collection. The Baker collection also includes a curious self-portrait of the young Edgar Degas which hints at the high style of draftsmanship that the artist later developed. Nearly 100 artists are represented in these 26 private collections.

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